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CAPE CURREY

RÉNÉ JUTA

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CAPE CURREY

BY

RÉNÉ JUTA

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1920

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

TO

MY FATHER

SIR HENRY JUTA, Kt.

JUDGE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME
COURTS OF THE CAPE PROVINCE

469169

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The PEOPLE mainly important who meander through this story are: —

The Governor and Commander-in-Chief at the Cape of Good Hope	Lord Charles Henry Somerset.
Lady Charles Somerset	The Governor's second wife.
Lieut. The Honourable George Keppel, afterwards Lord Albemarle	On his way to India.
Surgeon-Major James Barry	An enigmatic character.
Captain Josias Cloete	A big Dutchman, Military Secretary to the Governor.
Mr. Whitefoote	A.D.C.
Mr. Penderby	A.D.C.
Michael Van Breda	A rich merchant and landowner.
Dirk Zorn	Of "Leeuwenhof."
Edwards	An ex-convict.
Mr. Pringle	Scotch poet and press agitator.
———————	A mysterious young man.
Mr. John Thomas Bigge	His Majesty's Special Commissioner.
The Honble. Georgiana Somerset	The Governor's daughter.
Mynfrau Petronelle Van Breda	Of "Orangezicht."
Aletta Van Breda	Her niece.
Mrs. Crawford and her daughters	
Marie Focus	A Slave.

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CHAPTER I

Miss Georgiana Hears Some Plain English

"And I should be ashamed of having more learning than my husband."

Georgiana Somerset hurled the dictionary through the open window.

This movable force hit a movable object.

The sentry, with a burning cheek, glanced up at the open window, muttered "Oh, my Gawd," kicked the dictionary gently to one side, and continued his steady tramp up and down, outside the Government house.

The dictionary fell, after hitting the sentry's cheek, butter side down. It was a brilliant red book and the sentry began thinking about it. First he only cursed, then he began to think, then he became curious. It lay in front of the sentry box and soon began to assume proportions. At first it seemed a red book — vastly out of place — then its proportions grew to the importance of a sentry-box — a red sentry box, soon it seemed a house — a mountain — a sphere — something too enormous to be grinned about. So was a mouse delivered of a mountain! The sentry gave the dictionary another kick and turned it over on to its back. In the next

beat he spelled out the title: "Hinglish-French (must be something about Waterloo), S'help me." He bent lower. "S-o-t-t-i(ho) s-e. . . . Frenchie for Schottisch may be."

He glanced up again at the open window. At that moment, some one, all laughter, some one all pink, blue and sparkling looked out, and saw the red book lying at the feet of the sentry.

This vision settled him. . . . "Oh, Er"! and tried to forget the obstacle — this disturbing red dictionary.

In the room of the open window, through which the dictionary had made its exit, two pretty excited girls stood over a big Dutch table covered with books.

In those 1820 days young ladies of seventeen dressed for the part. The Governor's daughter — Miss Georgiana Somerset, in white frilled muslin, had blue ribbons to match her eyes —"forget-me-nots mixed with stars," so ran the receipt according to the latest cadet on the staff.

Georgiana's nose tilted divinely — too divinely: "Papa's nose and my nose are like the signposts on the highway. Mine points straight to heaven, his points straight to hell, and I am not sure that Papa's nose hasn't chosen the better part; for in heaven I vow I shall find myself having to curtsey to my own nose; I shall find no other acquaintance."

The Governor had related this conversation with many appreciative chuckles and some sly winks to my Lord Chief Justice Truter, whose nose was of a wavering disposition, showing no immediate desire for extremes except in its glowing end and inclined more to finding its heaven on earth.

The big dark girl at the opposite end of the table looked older and was younger than Georgiana, her rather heavy face was flushed and her smile showed excellent teeth. Both girls had short curly hair. Aletta Van Breda cut her brown hair for a whim, Georgiana loved to be like her friend; and there was not one, nor two, but several young men who carried in their wallets a fair curl that had once graced Miss Somerset's little head. Aletta's hair for a freak, they tied on to the absurd headpiece of an ancient scarecrow that terrified the grape-stealing birds in the Van Breda vineyards.

So much for their looks and their characters. And so back to the dictionary, all this while disturbing the usually calm horizon of the sentry. Two days before, the Inspector General of His Majesty's hospitals at the Cape of Good Hope, Surgeon-Major Barry, had given a tea party in his quarters in the Castle. To this tea-party had gone Miss Somerset and Miss Aletta Van Breda.

This James Barry, a thin strange little man, with arms kept tucked close to his ribs, big hooked

nose, prominent pale eyes and sandy red hair, did not appear to be capable of captivating the ladies of the Cape. Yet he was to be seen at this very hour of the day mincing across the Sthal Plein with two of the prettiest and tallest girls in all Cape Town on either side of him. Tall young Cloete of the Dragoons saw him and muttered that it was a monstrous shocking sight — but then Cloete found the little surgeon an imp, a puck, a teasing tantalizing little jay.

Small and delicately made, possessing a tongue gifted with much biting subtlety, having achieved promotion in the most surprising manner, this young Barry ruled the garrison, bullying the Governor, cajoling, winning, commanding, grumbling, and earning a reputation and a big private practice as a clever surgeon.

He lived at the old Vauban rectangular Fort, built by the Dutch on the foreshore of Table Bay, on the spot where Van Riebeeck the first Dutch Governor had made his low fortress, to protect himself and his band of followers and servants of the Dutch East India Company, from the savage hordes of Aborigines, whose instinct for hospitality could never quite overcome their fear of armed men who crawled on the sea on odd looking wooden constructions. The present castle or fort mounted some forty guns and faced the sea with a water gate.

Over the door of his castle quarters Barry wrote up what he was pleased to call his motto; his crest, he said, was shared by so many that he made no private use of it. As he seemed to possess no family and no relations this was taken to be one of his usual quaint remarks. But the motto was ominous, and it was because of this motto that Miss Somerset and her friend had been spending a few unprofitable minutes with a French dictionary. The motto ran "Il ne faut jamais faire des sottises a demi."

It was the word "sottise" that caused the worry.

"Aletta my love, listen! An error of judgment, a mistake, a foolish action. Voila! I begin to suspect this shocking young man of not being perfectly fit society for two charming young things."

Aletta jumped up impatiently.

"I wager the gallant Captain Cloete never seeks counsel of a dictionary — nor Mr. Penbury, nor Mr. Whitefoote, nor . . ."

And this is where Miss Somerset hurled the dictionary out of the window, accompanied by the appropriately feminine remark. For she knew without the help of a dictionary the exact weight value and worth of the brains and hearts of Cloete, Penbury and Whitefoote; and the value and worth of her attention to Barry's motto, she also knew, would not be undoubted by these young men. Therefore

Miss Somerset, who professed a hatred of arithmetic, by a subtle mathematical deduction, wherein her rapturous appreciation of Barry, imparted to Aletta, played no small part (never trust a woman, said Aletta, not even me, dearest), arrived at the conclusion which dispensed with a dictionary, sent it flying through the big Dutch window, accompanied by the remark that lends consideration to the idea that every well brought up girl in 1820 regarded all young men as possible husbands, and with the resignation born of adaptability, and with the courage of conviction that she acted for the best, suited her mind to the standard of these probable husbands when occasion demanded it. Women of to-day look at decay through rose-colored glasses from a Kursaal window, on rows of smiling Winterhalter great-grandmothers with sloping shoulders and gentle smiling faces; mothers of great soldiers, great statesmen, and great drinkers, who understood the art of being loving women at the risk of being regarded as placid Madonnas or necessary bores. That they kept in their hearts sentiments written by few, perhaps even unframed in thought, may now be suspected, since conscious revolt has succeeded well-lived acceptance, and expression is fashionable. Reproduction is succeeded by production. But one has that slightly conscious sensation that these sleek creatures, though possibly envying their

great grand-daughters enjoying strange pursuits and occupations, yet find themselves forced to murmur through canvas lips: "Dear, dear, but we hope some one wished to marry her."

To return again to the dictionary. The sentry having no power of analysis had given the book a last kick which sent it straight at the stomach of our mincing little surgeon, tripping up to Government House. When a Jack-in-the-Box is pressed in the middle, out he pops with a squeak: Barry's oaths were shrill falsetto squeaks and brought both girls to the window. Georgiana's eyes shone with glee, her nose insulted and mocked the entire situation.

"Dr. James, Dr. James, come here. What kind of sottise was it? We've looked it up in a most genteel dictionary. Explain dear Dr. James! What is a sottise? Your particular sottise? It is a monstrous mystery."

The Governor, passing through the lower hall, stopped to listen.

"Indeed, indeed, Ma'am, it is the Greatest Mystery," snapped Barry. "Call it a rib, Ma'am — there's to your original — a rib, a rib, and there's a bone for you to pick."

He stopped to pick up the dictionary and passed into the house, saluting preposterously, the two girls.

"My love," said Georgiana, very red in the face,

turning to Aletta, "English and especially what is called plain English is a very copious and exceedingly expressive language."

An Orderly brought up the miserable dictionary "with Surgeon-Major Barry's respects." It was open and she noticed the word "Bétise."

"Of course we know it was a Bétise, but to tell one what one already knows and then to add a mystery to it — a sort of puzzle or a problem Fable by Mr. Gay. . . . 'Not half the importance you suppose, replied the flea upon his nose.' Dare I, Aletta? I would dearly love to wave that rhyme as a parting shot; for does he not think himself of great importance, and Pa encourages the idea, and others are much too terrified of his tongue to contradict."

"What is the rhyme, Georgie? I have no acquaintance with Mr. Gay's poems. Indeed Dirk Zorn's efforts are enough for me."

"Then listen."

For a platform she had an old Dutch coffer, made by some slave from the East, inlaid and ornamented with strange and pleasant smelling woods.

> "Whether in earth, in air, or main,
> Sure everything alive is vain,
> When the crab views the pearly strands
> Of Tagus, bright with golden sands,
> Or crawls beside the coral grove,

And hears the ocean roll above,
Nature is too profuse, says he,
Who gave all these to pleasure me!"

And then the hawk speaks, and so on, to the snail; all conceited, seeing only nature creative for them. But listen Aletta, when we come to *man!"*

"What dignity's in human nature
Says Man, the most conceited creature,
As from a cliff he cast his eye
And viewed the sea and arched sky,
The sun was sunk beneath the main,
The moon and all the starry train;
Hung the vast vault of heaven. The man
This contemplation thus began:
When I behold the glorious glow"

"I cannot for the life of me remember the next verse. He speaks of the day, the night, the seasons, and goes on . . .

"And know all these by heaven designed
As gifts to pleasure human-kind;
I cannot raise my worth too high
Of what vast consequence am I!

Not of the importance you suppose,
Replies a flea upon his nose.
Be humble, learn yourself to scan!
What heaven and earth for you designed
'Tis Vanity that swells your mind!
For thee! Made only for our need
That more important fleas might feed."

Slow Aletta sat at the end of the Dutch table with frowning brows, her beautiful, lazy white hands folded in her ample lap; her mouth ever seemed too lazy to give utterance to her thoughts, and the words lay heavily on her pale lips as on velvet, absorbing half their sound.

"I think, Georgie, you must love this little doctor, he makes you so very cross." She watched the effect of her words and with enormous skill continued. . . . "A rib! Why, a rib is no mystery, for woman was made from a rib — Not! So the Bible says. But then what has that to do with Dr. James — and then why throw it to the dogs, meaning *us* my love, to pick: A dirty unladylike enough proceeding calculated to draw Tante Petronelle's wrath — if not the stroppie (strap). But he says his Sottise is a Mystery and a Rib! Dear Georgie, perhaps the klein doctorje is a little 'fey.'"

Georgiana, still blushing from the remembrance of Barry's snub, without turning from the wide window, replied: "When I said I would be ashamed of having more learning than my husband, I also meant I wish to have as much learning."

"Georgie," gasped Aletta.

"Why not, Miss," snapped Miss Somerset, facing her.

"Oh, Georgie, how red your face is," shrieked Aletta, rashly.

"Dem you," said Miss Somerset, "Why not?" "Thrown to the dogs, to you and me! Impertinent, gross little man. Is that the way to reply to me, the Governor's daughter. And do you know, Aletta . . ." Then she broke down. She told Aletta with a simple face how this same Impertinence had ridden with her the week before and had told her she was the "sweetest thing ever made from a rib . . .," that he picked her white heather, and made her a poem to go with it, and quoted passages from the new poem "Christabel," and worse to come. . . . One day when she had walked on the rocks at Green Point and hurt her foot, he had rubbed it for her, and, indeed, "Aletta, he kissed it," sobbed Miss Somerset. "That is one mood. The next day, all rudeness and cutting wit, and all his attention to Papa. And some days he understands so well, even to one's unspoken wish, then a day like to-day! Intolerable rudeness." She was in Aletta's arms, her muslin ruffles limp with tears.

Wise Aletta consoled her. "Leave the mystery to me, love: I, who dote on mysteries. Turn your thoughts, sweet, to one of those honest young men, perhaps to Captain Cloete. At least they are men, Georgie, and what is the little doctor but a few little bones, as he rightly says."

CHAPTER II

Chaste Conversation Tempered with Fear in the Heerengracht

The year 1820 had contained in its program an event of some importance to Great Britain, some importance to the future of South Africa, and a great deal of importance to Lord Charles Henry Somerset, brother of the Duke of Beaufort, Governor and Commander in Chief at the Cape of Good Hope. The British Government was all for colonizing; the lands of South Africa had been hitherto only dwelling ground for Dutch and Aborigines, and Lord Charles had up to then been a widower of some diplomacy with a not too moderately restrained interest in the breeding of race horses.

His first wife had died a few years before, leaving him with three daughters and a strong desire to take another and younger wife. One daughter, Elizabeth, had married young, a Wyndham; the youngest was at school, and Georgiana, the middle one, he brought out with him and his new wife after one of his visits to England.

The drama that began in 1820 was bred in the House of Commons, where Mr. Vansittart, Chancellor of the Exchequer, pointed a way to a prom-

ised land for the untaxable criminals, whose great crime of poverty led other Ministers to remark that if such criminals were not willing to emigrate, it might even be advisable to transport them without their consent.

But an untaxed Eldorado proved attraction enough; and on a day in March 1820 four ships arrived in Table Bay short of food and water and overburdened with four thousand poverty stricken seekers of untaxed plenty.

Waterloo days were hardly over; George IV was hardly King; this precious halfway house to India had only just been ceded — for a considerable consideration to England, when the Government, smarting under the sense of failure in America, looked to the South and its old-young Colony for regeneration. As a Minister remarked, " He would call the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old."

In 1820, on the high white verandah of the " Society House " in the Heerengracht, the principal street in Cape Town, a short stout man scowled and fidgeted over a glass of Cape Pontac; five or six men, who might easily have been taken for gentlemen of color, sprawled in long wooden chairs placed in rows on the verandah. Below in the street, excited groups of men and women chattered and gesticulated.

The Government autioneer was holding a public sale, opposite the Bank, a little further up the street. All the big merchants sent their surplus stock to the "Dutch" public sale. Crowds congregated, pushing and elbowing their way into the shade of the trees bordering the stream. Crowds, to buy the ladies' bonnets, Hodgson's ale, broadcloth, Wellington boots; ladies too were there, in short, high-waisted, beruffled muslins, accompanied by their slaves carrying the ubiquitous sunshade.

The liberated Malay women retained the crinoline whose abolition had been ordered by Royal decree. Beautiful creatures and splendid spots of color, they stood out from the crowd in yellow and green stiff satins with gorgeous triangular handkerchief of satin or silk over their well-oiled low brows and tied in a knot at the nape of the neck.

Mynfrau de Wahl, who was one of the few Dutch ladies to brave the morning sun, sailed by, with her Malay slave carrying her huge green umbrella. She still wore the mourning ordered for Queen Caroline's Funeral, being not only a snobbish lady, but also a very economical one. Her dress, which had been made locally after instructions from England that had arrived three months after the Queen's death, was of black crêpe over a white satin slip, black cloth pelise thrown open because of the heat, and lined with white sarsinet and trimmed with

white silk cord. Her bonnet of black leghorn was trimmed with "blond" and satin.

Almost opposite the Society House in conspicuous retirement from the street, stood a low white building, "The Exchange," called in the contempt of familiarity the "Den of Thieves." It was spaciously surrounded by trees and low-hanging chain railings.

The pale yellow gentlemen full of Indian recipes for indigestible dishes, were the chief assets to the "Society House." Soldiers or civil servants, they ran Cape Society in the intervals of Indian fevers and diseases, finding the Cape a Halfway House for convalescence between India and Home. Society Houses gave birth later to clubs, so popularized by the King, where cooking and good cooking became as essential as Macao.

Down the tree-bordered Heerengracht came a strange but small procession. A thin little figure in very tight uniform, carrying a large white umbrella, was seated on a staid elderly white pony, which looked as if no amount of agitation, no exciting haranguing crowd of starving emigrants, would instil the slightest desire in his fat lazy body for greater effort than the slow stately walk he was now enduring with such lethargic patience. A fat black slave walked beside the pony holding the bridle: about two yards behind, suiting his waddle

to the progress of the party, followed a fat spaniel.

Barry alone looked the incarnation of the "rib and the bone" he had flung, as a repartee, to the inquisitive Georgiana.

The fat stout man moved suddenly to the curved steps of the verandah or stoep. He greeted Barry, who dismounted, and together they walked into the big hall of the club house.

"The Governor's in a devil of a fuss," said Barry, slowly pulling off his thin cotton gloves, "and you, being President of the Senate must . . ."

The fat man interrupted him. "To the Duivel with these emigrants . . . why, man, dere is not corn enough for half of dem! Senate or no Senate. Vat I say is dis, man . . . de Burghers vill not vote more supplies, no: not if Miss Georgiana comes begging herself. Man doet wat man kan — vat?"

"Van Breda — if the Senate refuses, why, there is still Van Breda and Zorn, Merchants and Gentlemen; but it's a damn fuss, and poor Charles Henry is writing a report which will make the Home people smart. Milk and honey indeed! Dutch and Kaffir is more descriptive."

The President of the Senate, farmer, wine-maker, breeder of horses, Michael Van Breda, winked a bright blue eye.

He was used to these scenes. He remembered how during the Governor's absence the acting Gov-

ernor, Sir Rufus Donkin, with the lethargy of illness, had gone to him for help in those troublesome weeks, when, after a long hot summer Cape Town had endeavored to supply food to the emigrant transports: how Georgiana, who had stopped behind at the Cape at her express desire, had come down to the Burgher Senate — a thing never before done, a thing the Senate all privately feared might never happen again — how she had begged and commanded them to save the reputation and the honor of England, how he had answered "We no longer grow vegetables at the Cape, Ma'am, we breed horses," how Georgiana had replied for the sake of the Somerset honor, "that is, Sir, because we can no longer breed gentlemen." He remembered all this and wondered why these fool English settlers could not help themselves. "At least one should do what one could," translating his own motto.

A tall young man came into the room and slapped Barry on the back. "You insult my back, Sir," snapped the Inspector General, "You good for nothing young Irishman."

"Mijn Heer Sheridan," said Breda, "this business is no good for the Governor, and I have met a verdomte Englishman who says he is a gentleman emigrant. Vat I say is dis: No Gentleman would kom wid poor emigrants. But he say, at Madeira, he supplied his ship with food, and die verdomte

Governor, and die more Verdomte Bird, say — No, you shall not land. He say dere's die sickness on board, and he say — (with another wink this time at young Sheridan) "dat if die little doctor who valks like a frau, vas any good. . . ."

"You lie, sir," shrieked Barry.

"Yes, certainly I lie," chuckled old Van Breda, "but it gives you so very much pleasure to tell me so."

"Vaal, I mos be off, Doctorje," old Michael laid his large kind hand on Barry's shoulder, "You kom wid me, I go by de slave maket. De slaves is going to de dorges, dese days. As I kom trough my peach orchard, dere I see lying Chaaly en young Piet, my two wot work in de cellars. Dey vas crying and crying. Bot wot is de matter I say. 'Oom — Oom Baasie, dey cry, it a berry sad world for poor slaves. We stole some of de Baases brandy-wijn, and drink a lort from de brandy-wijn, and orl de morning we go be in de sun, but oh! Baasie, die verdomte ting vill nie trek nie!' My gracious me! it vos to say 'Die damn stoff vont maak us dronk,' and dey vas crying." His high big voice rose into a fortissimo of outraged ownership. . . . "Die brandy-wijn from Van Breda surely never could maak black stooff dronk. Tanks be!" He spluttered on more insulted. . . . "You steal and den insult my wijn, you black trash. I say . . . I sell

you by de market! But I go now to buy dem in. Dey have enough fright as it is . . . and dey werry useful boys."

"Sorry I can't just now, Van Breda, but it's a good story for H. E."

Barry jumped up and ran down the steps, while Tom Sheridan, exile, coughing himself to pieces, walked up and down the hall.

The Indian invalids eyed him as he passed. They were full of English news gleaned from the lately arrived emigrants, news that affected Barry, news that gave him a chance to pay back old scores, for the tongue of the Inspector General did not spare those pillars of the "Society House"; but this little oddity—"Cape Currey" as they called him was, after all their doctor, and heaven alone knew what might not result if "Cape Currey" was touched up. This precious full-pay convalescence at the Halfway House depended a good deal on the good will of Major Barry.

An orange-faced gossiper fired his little bomb:

"Bishop Burnett tells me there was a rumor that the new King knew a good deal about the Cape and that he had a good reason for loving it, as a dumping ground, not only for paupers, but for 'very left-handed princes.'"

"You imply then that Barry's rapid progress has been due to influence in high places," asked another.

"The whole affair is opera bouffe — personally I always figured to myself Barry springing up from the world, born of swords and dragons' teeth and nothing more human. Truter, of course, will find some excuse for stopping Burnett, and His Excellency will see Bird about sending on corn to Algoa Bay. But this Burnett man is kicking up a monstrous dust and all the officials are choking."

The "Indian" gentleman sauntered into the room.

All loved Tommy Sheridan and rushed him with questions. . . . Was it correct? . . . Would the dinner to Mr. Keppel be postponed owing to events? . . . Was it true that His Excellency had given old Leroux his finest imported gelding? and — the quid pro quo — had Leroux given the girl her freedom — pretty girl — some one had danced with her at the last Rainbow Re-unions. . . . They say Barry gets a commission on every slave he discovers.— Oh, well, if it is a lie.— Anyway, no one is going to deny that. Barry goes regularly to the slave market. They say old Lady Charles discovered the latest little episode and had the Fiscal to see to the proper dispensation of chastisement — but since the poor old lady sought Abraham's bosom, finding small satisfaction in her lawful spouse, well, quite a number of slave owners had got presents of geldings. This scandalous gossip buzzed round Sheridan, while

the strange little doctor rode up the steep mountain path at the back of the town and Michael Van Breda walked up the Waloon Street to the slave market.

Michael Van Breda was short, and stout and square; with pointed beard, very blue eyes, and florid high cheeks. He has been painted many times by Hals; he is Holland, pure, untouched, unspoiled Holland, transplanted into the Country of the Half-way House, where Dutch caution was no impediment to Eastern opulence. He grew rich, he imported slaves from the East coast of Africa, from Mozambique, and skilled workmen slaves from Java and Batavia where the Dutch had made themselves an idle, opulent and beautiful Empire; Michael had a taste too for art, he sometimes designed his own patterns for furniture made at the Homestead by thin-fingered Malays, and drew a good drawing for a new barn or winehouse to be wrought delicately in plaster by a half-breed from Mauritius. He was part owner of a big trading vessel which, after paying vast dues to the Dutch East India Company, managed to bring to Michael's pockets not only exquisite jade and oriental porcelain from China, but also other merchandise from the East, and a slave or two picked up by accident or by design at Zanzibar or some port higher up the Eastern coast. Now that the British Government had taken over this Peninsula, or bought it of the Dutch at The

Hague, it was considerably easier to make bigger trading profits; anyhow, until they were more organized.

His family was part of the little band of Van Riebeeck's followers, when that much tried servant of the Dutch East India Company landed at the Cape of Storms with rice and cotton clothing in either hand, whereby to barter more land and some concessions from the terrified bands of depraved Hottentot peoples who had not yet fled from the Portuguese guns. Later, when they had built themselves into a low fort not far from the spot where d'Almada, the Portuguese Viceroy, had been killed, they found round them natives from the west coast, Damaras, Namaquas, carrying bags of copper and gold to this magic house from whence came good food and the coveted tobacco. Tobacco formed the key to those wonderful copper, tin, and iron mountains in the north: they brought little luxuries too, such as wild ostrich feathers. The Infanta of Spain had had her portrait painted by Don Velasquez with two of these curled round her bright hair: the courtiers wore them in little tufts on the velvet caps: Rubens, the painter, made his wife put them in her hat. Europe was smothered in wild ostrich feathers.

There had been sickness and other hardships borne by the little band in the old fort; endless pa-

tience too, as the natives were very shy and took fright easily; and apart from the one or two cadets — sons of good families — the Company's paid servants were not educated men, and life was a lonely, isolated and dangerous affair. Wild animals were responsible for many ill-spared deaths, or a poisoned arrow-head from some lair of the Hottentots on the sand dunes round the Fort.

It is an heroic tale, the story of the colonizing Governor Van Riebeeck and Maria de Quellerai, his wife, with their brave friends, but it is only brought in here to help out and explain Michael Van Breda's inheritance — an inheritance of hardly-won land where easy opulence suddenly succeeded poverty and danger.

There must come a time in all family histories when peace must succeed strife, and change is always sudden, so sudden as to re-act on the lives of the fortunate ones as a sedative; they bloom and blossom and grow large and round, Contentment and Prosperity sitting like guardian angels on either hand, a Cornucopia at their feet yielding corn and grapes in abundance, wild beasts and poisoned arrows in the almost forgotten background.

Even local politics, not to mention world history, had ceased to interest those rich merchants of the Tavern of the Seas, the Receivers of the Loot of the East, the Harbor of the Flotsam and Jetsam

of the two great Oceans. What the waves tossed up on the dunes was not the least of the treasure so simply acquired. It was with a mind entirely set on his errand that Van Breda toiled up the steep Wale or Waloon Street beside the half dried-up canal which supplied sufficient moisture to the tall lanky palm trees growing before the flat-roofed low white houses of that street. With difficulty he held on his head the large white leghorn hat, of gigantic dimensions, for the hot devastating South-East wind blew through the funnel of mountain made by gaps between the "Devil's Peak" and Table Mountain proper — a gale such as is not met with in other corners of the earth. He turned off sharply into Burg Street, into the square where the Town House reared its perfect proportions, and so into the Riebeeck Square where the long, low flat Slave Market stood. Above the square, almost honeycombed into the hill behind, the tiny mosques and white and pink and yellow houses of the Malay Quarter showed. Many Malays had by this time bought or acquired their freedom and lived here, earning their living as fruit peddlers or bazaar holders, or cobblers and fish sellers, meeting the boats at Rogge Bay and carrying up their fish in the same sort of baskets as used by the carriers of fruit — huge, round, loosely plaited reed baskets slung from a pole carried across the sholders. To differentiate

them from the slaves who wore a sort of uniform, these carriers wore modern dress, but still kept to the conical shaped reed hat, round at the brim, rising suddenly to a point, having attached to it hundreds of many-colored ribbon streamers that floated in the breeze.

Some of the Malays prided themselves on possessing better blood than their slave brethren, for many of their ancestors had come to the Cape with the exiled Sheik Joseph, whose story is still possessed of some mystery. Certain it is that a man full of wisdom and honor in his own country had one day landed in False Bay from a Dutch East Indiaman, surrounded by a collection of disciples and friends, had founded in the sandy Isthmus what amounted to a monastery, and had been buried there. His tomb was a sacred spot and pilgrimages were made to it once a year by the Faithful. At the corner of the rounded, small-bricked steps, leading up to the Slave Market, before a little pink-papered stall, under a gigantic green umbrella, sat old Rachael, whose history appeared not to exist apart from the rôle she had played for at least eighty years at the steps of the market. She made and sold lollipops of her own receipt, brought from the East by some forgotten ancestor. Her unusually long, thin nervous fingers stirred odd messes in bright pots behind the little stall, until she died, aged one hundred and

ten. Her receipts, or some of them, were sold, and it is possible still in this year, 1919, to eat "Rachael's sweets" in Cape Town. She was gossiping with a friend, older and more a mass of nerves and bones than she. The old lady, looking more like a sad lady monkey than a Malay woman, was showing her rolls of rix dollars. Because of the wind she had all ten of them spread out before her on the hard, dirty road, with a big stone to keep each from flying away into the Bay; then she spread out yard upon yard of fine Indian lawn, and lastly she placed two copper oil pots behind the muslin.

"Allah, Allah," grunted Rachael, "Elizabeth, dat klapper oilie I jus' gort by de ole slave who kom an' hes no tongue. He speak by die fingers — like dis. Ach fooi! Rachael jus' learn it a lorng time ago by old Massa Van Blerk, dar by Newlands. Ole Rachael was Ayah by Massa Van Berk's se child. Majuba he know Rachael werry much love klapper oilie for de hair, and good India muslin. But mar, Elizabeth he gort a treasure by Rachael — hard to part with. Assuredly, Rachael gave him but half what he wanted. Nie, who he work for, Rachael doesn't know — preeps by Myjnheer Van Breda — dardie fat little man. Kom, we go see what trash dey sell to-day." Elizabeth helped the old hag collect her treasures into a tin lacquered box, and hobbled after her into the slave

market, munching aromatic lollipops collected from behind Rachael's stall.

Among the crowd surging into the great hall of the Slave Market was Michael Van Breda, his high shrill voice always the center of a surrounding of admirers and cronies. He pushed his way to the auctioneer who stood at the foot of a trestle table at the end of the hall. The man had a red flushed face and held papers in his hand. On the table stood an intense little man obviously out of place, with impertinent nose and intelligent forehead. Round this group, gazing in open-mouthed wonder, stood the slaves who were waiting their turn of sale. Michael Van Breda pushed his fat good-humored way to the forefront of the audience.

"Vat die Deuvel," . . . he began, "Mar Mr. Pringle, dat you should den seize such opportunities. Do you den vant my sambrel for a vip?"

The person addressed as Pringle paused in his oratory, and with a Scotch accent turned on Michael Van Breda.

"By gom, Mr. Van Breda, Sir, hold your peace. For it's you and yourn that has seen the best of your days in this land. It's no by giving two acres o' your worrst land to my countrymen thaat I'm getting at ye. An' it's no for trafficking with these pui ignorant black children thaat I'm getting at ye. These sins will find ye out in their order, for the

Scotch is stronger than the French blood in ye. And these black children will grow up and turn on ye. No, Michael, it's in the seats of the Mighty that there's blackness and wickedness, but they canna kill me nor what is at the back o' me. The Press canna be killed, not by all the Governors on earth: NO," he roared, " an' it's the Press what'll kill ye in the end. It will be dragging out yer secret sins, it'll be putting ye up for sale; it'll be loosing yer chains ye pur black heathen," . . . he turned his head aside and addressed the grinning slaves.

Michael, apparently the only man who dared interrupt, laughed a great hearty laugh. " Ha, ha, Mr. Pringle, take care man dat we do not put you with your countrymen out dere in Tafel Bay. Dere's no power vat can land dose settlers here, Mr. Pringle, unless die storm does it for dem."

He turned away leaving Mr. Pringle to continue, and edged his way towards his own slaves whom he had come to buy back. He whispered to young Piet. " Yong Piet, you start a sorng an' I will buy you back; see."

Young Piet grinned. " Yaa, Baasie, yong Piet see." And then from somewhere in that room began a dull minor murmur with all the insidious suggestion of suppressed temperament, of some temper not akin to the Western moods, ridiculous words locally manufactured, only accentuating, by their

simplicity the hidden fire and fury and smouldering something these people of mixed bloods kept hidden from their masters.

The murmur rose to a comprehensive song and became a chorus:

> " Mij maa iss die — die valk wid die Penguin eggs
> Mij paa iss die — die valk wid die Krombeen
> Mij naam iss Lahingo Hoy,
> Mij naam iss Lahingo Hoy, Hoy,
> Chirie, chirie, chirie, wid die Kreuwaar
> Die Kaapse Coolie boy."

All the grinning slaves were singing and beating a wonderful syncopated rhythm. Mr. Pringle stormed on, then stopped. Even his righteous covenanting blood tingled to the swelling rhythm of the East. The East-Coast natives took up the end of the ditty in the hoarse soundless voice of their races; pure black, these, untinged by Portuguese, Malay or Dutch, save perhaps a trace of the rare Arab blood, Swahili, Zulu, and Kaffir. Imperturbable, huge, bronze giant men, whose rare speech is among the beautiful languages of the world, whose diction is perfect, whose exquisite similes and picture language can find its parallel only in the writings of the Old Testament. They sang, or rather almost spoke their deathless curse, insulting in its superb aloofness.—

Baam, Zonda. Baam Zonda,
Zonda Bantu, Bogai Nagatu.

The auctioneer pulled the tight blue trousers of Mr. Pringle. "They are working up to trouble. Soon they will intoxicate themselves with their own singing. Come down. I implore you." Mr. Pringle shrieked above the din: "This is your doing, Michael Van Breda, slave dealer, English lick-spittle. Mr. Bishop Burnett shall hear of this. Damn ye." He hopped down and out into Riebeeck Square, but caught Michael's fat laugh; "Dat's die beste word you say to-day, Mr. Pringle — Yaa, Man doet vat man kaan."

CHAPTER III

How, in a Garden, a Secret was Kept from the World

Like a vast gray screen, Table Mountain rears itself behind the town.

"In the beginning," announced the Honorable Georgiana to the ever surprised audience at a coffee drinking party, "In the beginning God created the world and Table Mountain."

It suggested respect, which came as an unexpected thing from Georgiana. She refused to leave the audience swallowing this pill, but sent it down with a bitter draught.

Her audience was assembled in the small English drawing-room of Mrs. Crawford, a lady who chaperoned Georgiana when half an occasion presented itself — sometimes when there was no occasion at all, for her husband was Master of the Cape Hounds, and for daily bread, held various small and promiscuous billets as a Government official. Mrs. Crawford said that her husband's talents had driven her to daily prayer, because she felt that if bread was forthcoming it came most certainly by the Grace of God.

She had three daughters: she told her acquaintances she regarded all as future nuns, as their father would never allow them to marry Cape Dutchmen, and in a year's time there would be no Englishmen left at the Cape the way things were being run. They were nice girls, with decent complexions and enquiring noses, brought up in strict English fashion — lots of soap, no butter, and back-boards; and their outlook on life seemed as yet untinged by their ultimate destiny. They formed a silent and appreciative part of Georgiana's audience at their mother's parties. Mrs. Crawford had caught from the late acting Governor, Sir Rufane Donkin, the habit of conciliation, though she stooped only to conquer the ladies, and was famous for her conventions, with much show of fuss and feathers.

"You dull Dutch dears," ("devils," Georgiana whispered into Dutch Aletta's ear, continuing the subject of the mountain) "do rise up in the midst of your eternal coffee-drinking and call it blessed — you should sing your psalms with your shoes off, and your faces to the mountain." They smiled at her, without even wondering what she meant, though it sounded clever or a little bit mad. "Fey," they called it. And then her enthusiasm overstepped diplomacy. "Oh, but fie! Fie! I vow you live only for your rix dollars, your slaves and your Konfeits — you do not care for your country excepting

when it means more rix dollars." And then Aletta's exquisite Dutch hand covered the impetuous little English mouth that so constantly uttered true sayings and kept Lord Charles in a perpetual state of conciliation.

Georgiana slapped it away. "You know, Aletta, you do not love this land — none of you would dare bother to keep it, and every one of you was content to be sold to us for thirty pounds a head."

Tears raced down her cheeks and she beat the heavy chintz cushions with both emphatic hands. "Oh, you terrible people — I do love it so — I do love it so. But you are a distracting people," she sniffed with finality, despairing of them as a race.

Never had a country fermented a race out of such divers clay. The Portuguese swept clear their Southern end of the continent when in the 14th century they rounded, the seas of the two oceans with the copy of a famous map, a century old, as their inspiration and guide, past the Cape of Storms to India. Some adventurous spirits had come so far, but few within the memory of man had gone further. Still these were their authorities — Marco Polo, Macodi, the Moor, who had made the map they held; Jacombe of Majorca and the Jew, Abraham Lakut. Prince Henry of Portugal spared neither labor, time, nor energy: he was their grand inspiration; he and his dream — to plant the Cross on new

headlands. The Crescent had invaded his world, therefore he carried his Cross into the utmost corners of the globe. His Captains crept up fever-bordered rivers, others sailed by odd and devious ways for India, via Alexandria, others tried the northwest passage to India.

It was Bartholomew Diaz with two small ships, short of food and water, with more bravery than knowledge, who burst into the India Ocean and planted a Cross very near the lands that were giving so much anxiety to Lord Charles Somerset, lands that have been for generations battlefields; Port Elizabeth, or Algoa Bay — the way to Goa in the East. On his way home to report, Diaz stopped at Cape Point, the end height of the Cape Peninsula Mountains, and scarred a gigantic cross into the mountain; and the inhabitants of the land, small, shy yellow people, watched from behind big rocks, and did nothing but watch in terror.

The tremendous Pageant of Discovery met at last in the little City of Lisbon; but Diaz' news had been almost anticipated by the world-famous letter confided by Cavilhao — stunned by the glories of his discoveries of the great Indian trade from Aden onwards — to the jew Lakut, who brought it to the King. " Keep southward," ran this letter, " persist, Africa must come to an end." " And when the Eastern ocean is reached let them ask for Sofala

and the Island of the Moon (Madagascar) and they will find pilots (the great Arab fleet) to take them to Malabar."

Then Vasco da Gama went to the great scarred Cross, and planted another, a wooden one, on the shores of Table Bay, and had doings with the scarab worshipping, wall-painting, jabbering little people, until he found that with beads and spices the natives became friendly, and offered him the entrails of wild beasts, to show their friendliness.

Following the Portuguese came the Dutch and the English, friends until they reached the East; then blows and fighting, both using the Cape as a halting place on the road to the East. It remained for the Dutch to note its value. They sent Van Riebeeck his wife, children, and a Company — a romance, this shipload of fools and heroes. From a little fort in the dunes these people grew fresh vegetables for the passing ships, and the scurvy-stricken crews drew fresh water from their wells or remained in the Fort Hospital to recover. When the Stadholder of Holland, fleeing to his brother William, in England for safety, brought with him, metaphorically, the Key to the Dutch Colonies, England undertook to hold the Cape until such time as the Stadholder should come into his own. At the Cape there was some small opposition, but so half-hearted as to give rise to the suspicion, that as long as commerce was

not interfered with, either flag did. Later, the Dutch flag flew again and still none minded. Then the great days of the Napoleonic Wars brought this Tavern House into such importance that England found it necessary to be quite sure that the French flag should not be added to the list of owners of the valuable strip of mountain and seashore. The Battle of Blauuberg, fought between the English and the Dutch under Jenssens reinforced by French troops on the sands beyond Cape Town Castle, proved really a battle — and the Cape was ceded to England for a certain sum of money. Once again the Union Jack flew over the Castle walls. The romance of its history would insult the Cape were it only to be told in this condensed and unromantic form; fortunately the people who made world history wander in and out of its centuries and join the distant Tavern of the Seas to the war-fermenting countries of Europe:— seared, scarred, and riddled with wounds, like a pack of old fighting dogs ever ready to jump at a quarrel, one or other breaks loose and bites into new worlds, and the poison of civilization runs through a fair land.

Georgiana's unfortunate reference to the sale of the Cape, for that is what it amounted to, was gossiped about that same day at the Society House; the valuation of each worthy merchant and burgher seemed low at thirty English pounds. But what

matter what Government, when business went on better under the new régime! Lord Charles added another Aide-de-Camp to his staff, a young man named Penderby — nominally A.D.C., in reality, as Lord Charles put it, " to edit at formal gatherings the speeches of the Honorable Georgiana."

On their way to a conciliation gathering at Mrs. Crawford's, Miss Somerset and Penderby, riding through the Gardens of the Company, passed another riding party, and Miss Somerset smiled into the astonished face of the new Aide-de-camp with all the bravery of a pretty woman piqued and flustered by the sudden appearance of a thin little man who made up in charm what it seemed impossible to ignore he lacked in sex. Having James Barry as its chief glory, the quaint procession proceeded up the steep Buitenkant Street towards the Table Mountain — Psyche, the spaniel, waddling and panting, and oblivious to the packs of half wild, half starved dogs who came tearing down the mountain slopes, howling and barking, to their goal at the water's edge, Rogge Bay, where at sunset and sunrise they gorged on the offal and decaying fish that lay on the beach after the Malay fishermen had drawn in their heavy nets. Barry turned off into a mountain path leading into that part of the town called Orangezicht. Skirting the homestead of the Bredas, they passed through a wonderful bit of

wooded ground, where gray granite boulders, clumps of prickly pears and wild olive bushes formed the picturesque wilderness.

In one of the deep fissures, where a mountain stream ran wildly down into the town, a group of Malay washerwomen, clapping and rubbing the linen on the rocks, chattered and laughed over their work.

Soon Barry dismounted, left the pony with Black Sam and continued his climb on foot. Orangezicht, true to its orange color, was blazing in the sun; far below, the town lay in evening mist. Music broke the intense mountain silence, music, quaint, fantastic, suggestive of the East, with gaiety only accentuating sadness, rhythm all syncopated; not the music of white men. At the high white walls of a homestead, Barry stopped. Great masses of cerise and magenta bougainvillia creeper almost hid a small grated door in the wall. Barry fitted a key into the lock and walked into the loveliest garden in all Cape Town. The garden was built like an arena, in terraces; each terrace bordered by a trim laurel hedge. A thick shrubbery of pink Chinese roses (called oleander, in other countries) with palest sky-blue plumbago, screened the white wall. In the center of the arena, on a velvet lawn shaded by orange trees, a slave band, dressed gaily in white Bengalese fashioned garments with brilliant turbans, made the

extraordinary music. An old slave, less Malay than the others, carried some rimpje seats from the high white stoep of the dwelling house, thatched and gabled in old Colonial style. There was something remarkable about the slaves — they were all men, all very serious, all quite silent.

Barry looked down upon the scene.

"It is one of the few things that grow worse with time," he spoke slowly, and his face became like the face of some other person. The strain of the muscles relaxed, as though relieved of an intense responsibility they dared resume ease and relief; the prominent blue eyes moistened, a smile of intense sadness broke the severity of the peaked face, and hurrying down the grass slopes he caught in his arms a small beautiful boy.

"Dear heart, dear heart," he whispered, "You are glad to see me? You have been happy? The music has amused you?"

The boy struggled.

"Oh, yes," he gasped, "thank you, thank you. But I like Klein Adonis best; Adonis is the newest, littlest slave; as small as me, so we play together. He is easier to play with than old Majuba. And, dearest, he talks! Just think. He can talk. Just like you and me! I begged and begged, did I not, and now I have a talking slave."

Barry sighed and turned to an old slave who took his cap and white umbrella. "Ah, Majuba, let us hope for no evil results."

Majuba, his face expressing all the scale that lies between good and bad, slowly and very expressively shrugged one shoulder.

"I wonder," said Barry, "One word too much, Majuba, and there will be an end of peace in Eden."

The boy ran off and left Barry.

"How many years is it, Majuba?"

The slave held up both hands.

"No, twelve; oh, I do not forget," said Barry, sitting down on the terrace. "Majuba, sometimes I would give my right hand to have you tell me all you know. Of how you served him — of Old Cape Town — how he lived — and Majuba, I would like to tell you how I live, but then that would be a monstrous unpleasant story and I doubt not the very last story I should ever tell — and then there would be no one to care for the little one, but you, Majuba," — he patted the old slave on the shoulder.

"Are the slaves happy? I pay them well, anyhow — but this new boy? I don't like it — I fear the consequences though it gives him so much happiness. God knows I owe him some happiness." His old impatience returned. "Oh, you old dumb devil! Do not stand looking like a Sphinx and a Nemesis combining to give me the nightmare. Look to it

that no harm comes of this little talking monkey."

Then he turned again to welcome the boy, who had returned, carrying a little bow and some small silver arrows. The child sat down on the coarse Cape turf, whose long solid " feelers " seemed perpetually to be seeking the moisture denied them all through the long summer months; though water from the two deep wells in the back orchard garden and the swift mountain stream in the oak woods, beyond the white walls, kept the garden greener than most of the gardens of the town.

" Sit down beside me, dearest," said the boy. " See Klein Adonis has changed my dear red and black arrows — nicer to have new arrows. What do you call the color of these arrows, dearest? " he continued, fingering the sharp silver things.

" Silver . . . the color of the s . . . no. Why run over there, beloved, to that pale tree there — now look up — what do you see? "

" Oh, silver, silver," screamed the boy. " It's a silver tree. What is its name — the name of this tree? " flinging himself on the grass again beside Barry.

" Come — I'll whisper the surprise,"— bending down.

" Oh, oh," cried the child. " Is that true. It is called a Silver Tree. Why? Why? Why? Do tell me! You see Adonis will not know; and

my books will not. Oh, please tell me the true story. And do they grow in other gardens, these trees, or on the mountain behind?"

"Yes, they grow on the mountains. Majuba," speaking on his fingers, "bid the music cease!"

"This is the story, my poor little child. Listen! Once upon a time there was given, in a far-off country, on a high mountain called Olympus, a wedding feast; for Orpheus was to wed Eurydice."

"What is wed," asked the boy.

"Orpheus was to take Eurydice to live in his house and to play with him in his garden — to be his wife."

"Was Eurydice a little black boy like Adonis?"

"No, Eurydice was a lovely woman."

"Oh, what is a woman?"

Barry's face puckered. "A gentler creature than a man — with kind arms made to hold little boys and girls — and long soft hair, and — what is it, my child?" The boy had hidden his face in the grass, and his small body shook.

"I wish for a woman," he bemoaned, "I wish to see a woman, the thing that is kinder than a man. I want to be held in the arms of a woman. No — no," as Barry involuntarily bent over him with outstretched arms, "your arms are kind, dearest, but — oh, why may I not see this woman?" Suddenly he sat up.

"Are there woman slaves — white ones, like you and me?"

Barry's pale eyes looked down the steep grass terraces.

"No," he said.

There was silence for some moments.

Then —"Why am I always alone here, with black people? Adonis says that he remembers when he was littler, that he saw many houses and gardens, and a vast well of water called 'The Sea,' whereon are black tortoises that crawl through the Sea and cover their heads with white cappies which flap in the wind."

"Monstrous unpleasant tale it seems to me."

"No, but listen — further. He tells me that he lived with a father and a mother and brothers . . . only one day a person called 'Mynheer Doctor' came, and they spoke to him, the father and mother of Klein Adonis, and then Klein Adonis came to live here and be my speaking slave. What is a mother?"

"A woman," replied Barry, rising as if he would leave.

"Can a woman be a mother — as well as being a woman?"

"Yes."

"But then, can she be a wife, and a woman, and a mother?"

"Yes."

"How wonderful. But there are too many things to know. It makes my head ache. Let us rather play. But I forgot — there is the tale of Or . . . what was it?"

"Never mind now. I will tell you the tale another time, and one day when I cannot come to you, I will write to you, in big plain letters. Now we will go and shoot with these . . ."

"Silver arrows," interrupted the boy.

He clapped his hands to call the slaves. Suddenly he looked at his hand and held it up.

"Dearest — this hand will not clap as loudly as the other one; sometimes it does not feel like a hand."

Barry looked at the boy's hand and then left him and walked towards the house, where old Majuba was carrying baskets of oranges down to the Musician slaves.

Their conversation was conducted through the medium of the finger language.

"The child's hand . . . ?"

"Yes, very sad," replied Majuba, shaking his white head.

"The new oil given by the ship's doctor — brought from Borneo — you have used it?"

"Yes — that and also the sweet odored black bark given by Malay Hajh and only parted with

by the aid of many gold pieces and a small piece of dirty 'lap,'[1] long treasured by a woman slave met at the slaves' market, said to be a portion of the robe of Sheik Joseph, the holy man, whose tomb lies near the Hottentot Mountains. For a few yards of India muslin and some large quantity of 'Klapper Oilee' and a sheaf of rix dollars, she was persuaded to part with the 'Lappie.'"

"Sir, but it was a dirty old lap. All has been done that can be done. The boy is happy."

With the unconscious rudeness of an old servant, Majuba again picked up his orange basket and proceeded to walk down the garden to the other slaves. As Barry let himself out at the little garden gate and pushed his way through the undergrowth of protea and stringy-leafed gladioli, towards the appointed spot of waiting for Black Sam, Psyche and the pony, he muttered over and over again to himself: "Wonderful to be a wife, and a woman, and a mother . . . a woman . . . and a mother!" Then he pulled himself up suddenly. "Yes, wonderful! But the devil take it all. It is sometimes a damnable enough business. It is less damnable to be a man."

[1] "Lap" is a Cape dialect word for old cambric, or literally rag. "Klapper oilee"— cocoanut oil, used profusely by all Malay women for their hair.

CHAPTER IV

An Interview in a Vineyard, Which Results in Many Suspicions

On the slopes of Lion Mountain which screens the Town from the Atlantic Ocean, the slaves were picking the grapes in the opulent vineyards of Mynheer Zorn of Leeuwenhof.

The song of the pickers disturbed the placid blue atmosphere; from the huge cellars, under the oaks round the courtyard floated strains of the "treading song," sung in parts, by the low voices of the slaves — a long descriptive epic wherein the virtues and vices of all the household were divulged, falling and rising, according to the temper of the day.

"The Master is like a rotten orange."
"The Mistress is like a very big pomegranate."
"Ja-Ja-Swa dra-Swa dra!"

Never far from the dismal minor key these songs; they seemed ill-fitted to be sung under a blazing sun on the high ground above the sea.

The Zorn slaves were mostly Madagascans, or from the Straits; huge men and women in the Zorn uniform of purple and white. It is strange to

know to what degrees of trade the big landowners and their wives resorted, in those 1820 days. They found a word for the legitimized bargaining — "smouching" mostly indulged in by the women. The wife of a rich merchant and the owner of pretty slave girls, packed up a weekly hamper of what every woman knows another woman will want, and hied forth the slave to her neighbor's homesteads, to sell her wares; and if the neighbor's husbands found wares not included in the baskets (and the pretty slave hoping to get at least a something out of the bargain, seldom objected), well, who is to blame any one in the matter, least of all the slave, who very often was not allowed even a few cents on the main transaction. The morality of the merchant's wife who came off best in the deal, was to be judged by 1820 morality, and by the amount of gossip which history collects in its long roll through centuries.

Mijnfrau Zorn held herself above such trading, and placing herself and her rival in virtue, Mijnfrau Breda, on a high pedestal, allowed no pretty slaves on the Leeuwenhof estate, and when Marie Focus' daughter Sana was sold to neighbor Bam, she breathed more freely. But she packed the fruit and vegetables more elegantly into the huge swinging baskets that hung from the shoulders of the men slaves, who ran down the steep hillside every morn-

ing, into the Riebeeck Square, crying the glories of the Zorn gardens.

Dirk Zorn, her son, saw Sana's departure in a different spirit, and because of it, sat under a bank of pomegranate trees that edged the vineyards, and Marie Focus, the slave, stood before him. She had a wonderful face, this Marie! Her Father, it was rumored, was a disgraced Viceroy in the Indies, her mother a Malay, with French blood in her veins. The English had used Marie as a spy before the annexation of the Cape.

It suited Master Dirk to get Marie Focus deep in her grievances; true, it became a bigger tragedy than he had the taste for, for Marie was dramatic, had lost her child and had heard some rumors, which Master Dirk was not going to ignore without using them for his little scheme and to the best advantage.

" Master Dirk," said Marie, speaking the perfect English of the older slaves, her eyes glowing under her purple turban, " Master Dirk, I say, curse these English and the Dutch too. All liars. All. All. I, Marie Focus, work here, where I sold all, risked all, Master Dirk, to gain freedom. When I was working by the Fiscal, before he became Justice, the English came sailing into the Bay. I was in the garden one day, picking green figs for preserve, when a sailor boss come along, quietly, behind the wall — much money it seemed to me he offered — I must go

down to the sea — must go on to the ships — to the English ships. And there I went. If I was caught! You know what happened to the runaway slaves out at Boshof, Master Dirk, and the slaves from Welgelegen! Ah, but I hear the cries now, and I heard them then, Master Dirk — how they tried to catch Movo, you remember? How he ran, round and round the courtyard — Oh — I remember well. The English wanted to know where was the treasure, guns and silver taken from the Castle and hidden by the Fiscals — I, Marie, knew. 'You tell,' they say, 'and then we will give you freedom and send you back to the East.' I told Master Dirk. I took, that night, the Captain to the big stone wine cellar below the kitchen, and in one of the vats was the treasure — much silver and some gold. Next day, the English sailor and soldiers came to the house, and the Fiscal — well, Master Dirk, you know now he is a friend of the Governor. Marie Focus is still the slave."

"Marie, you know Sana goes to the Rainbow dances now?"

"No, Master Dirk, I have not seen Sana since she has been with Mynheer Bam."

"Sana is not with Mynheer Bam, Marie; have you not heard?"

"Master Dirk," said Marie Focus, "If you are going to speak the things I hear from the slaves who

go down to the 'stadt' you must not. No, no, Master Dirk, for then my heart must die."

"Marie, listen, don't speak like that. Stop it, Marie, listen! Mynheer Bam has been given one of the Governor's horses, and Sana is working in the Governor's kitchen."

Marie Focus shrieked so loudly that Dirk got up and placed his huge leghorn sun hat over her head and held it down.

"Marie, woman, be silent," he panted, because Marie was a strong woman, and also she had but once sold wares not included in the smouching basket. Only once, and she had been very faithful to the memory of the ensign of dragoons, who had been stationed at the Castle many years ago. And then Dirk Zorn whispered things to Marie Focus that were talked of at the Rainbow dances, where the slave girls found fresh admirers among the young burghers and soldiers and citizens of Kapstaad, things whispered even then, laughed about in the taverns, where men left Veneer on the doormat and often went home without it; he whispered so cleverly to Marie Focus that soon these things would be placarded up in the streets of Cape Town, written to London, and gloated over by the discontented Boers and Scotch settlers in the new Eastern Provinces.

Dirk Zorn was a poet too, which made it worse,

for he made pictures glow with color and throb into reality. Dirk Zorn loved one woman, a young girl; but then girls were loved very young in Kapstaadt when it was 1820. Dirk at sixteen had loved Aletta, Aletta loved the English, was always with the little doctor, Captain Cadogan or the Governor's daughter, but Aletta listened to his stories, read his love-letters, and pushed him from her. Dirk wanted more than appreciation and vowed to have Aletta. In the meantime Sana had done very well; now he was deprived of both.

So this all bred some pretty little tales, as you may think! A mad woman and a jealous Dutchman in a hot vineyard, with the scent of the trodden grapes coming from the hot cellars in great intoxicating fumes; the hot scorched red earth beneath them bursting in long red fissures, the atmosphere danced and glowed between their heights and the town far below. From brains to feet those two kept pace with their world, all hot and strong and pulsating.

Unfortunately for every one concerned in the tragedy, Dirk wandered down to the Orangezicht woods, to sit in the shadow of the mountain, perhaps to catch a glimpse of Aletta, and so he met Barry, walking alone and quickly through the woods with unseeing eyes, his mind fixed upon the treasure he kept hidden in the white walled garden.

No one will ever analyze that source which is

stirred into action by the hidden impulses, so effectually hidden until just the one psychological moment of betrayal arrives. It may never arrive — but sometimes, the very concentrated state of mind betrays its own secret, the air is filled with the desire always more intense where secretive, the other mind leaps into subconscious deduction — vague and elusive — and half the secret is shared! So Barry, rushing away from his secret, yet filled with it to the exclusion of all else, suddenly set alight some vagueness of suspicion in the sub-consciousness of Dirk's mind.

It was an unfortunate affair, because all these ideas assume shape some time or other, and the imagination does the designing. Dirk meant to remember it and did.

Marie went to a "smouching" slave friend of hers who went often to Government House, and learnt slave gossip and the gossip of the Club House, "how Miss Somerset was in love with the little Doctor, but that *he* went to Government House only to see Lord Charles, how the new Ladyship was 'too much on the horseback' to trouble about what went on in her house — that Dr. Barry made love to all, but never went to the Rainbow dances," and so on.

More unfortunate still, that an ex-convict named Edwards, lately out of prison, sat drinking Cape

Constantia wine in the tavern called The George Inn in the Water Kant Street, and writing maledictions on Somerset, destined to appear in the new free press edited by Fairbairn and Greig and Thomas Pringle, he whom the Governor regarded as a prying negrophilist rapidly undoing his administrative work along the unsettled borders of the native territory. As Edwards wrote, he stopped to look up and through the big windows on to the seashore — as if fearing detection; once he glanced at the walls of the George Tavern, where dirty papers pinned to the panelling did the duties of a town crier and an advertisement column. He read, "a charming young widow makes known the death of a tender husband and adds a piece of 'negotie winkle' — in consequence of the death will be sold, etc. . . ." (here followed a list of the advertised shop-goods).

Edwards laughed; after some years of prison the behavior of fellow humans in ordinary life was a burlesque that kept him busy chuckling more than half the day.

"Notice," he read: "A worthy widow sorrows over the death of a husband — aged ninety-two. No person must console with me.

MIJNFRAU VAN DER LIND,
90, Van Riebeeck Square."

"Poor," thought Edwards, and continued:

"A rich widow — wanting consolation." He took down the address, which goes to prove that the capacity for seizing the opportunity which sometimes makes a convict, might, with the smallest diversion, make a successful man.

Edwards reads on:

"For sale! A Chinese coachman, apply Zorn, Leeuwenhof."

"Zorn of Leeuwenhof. Ah, yes, the girl Sana came from Leeuwenhof."

And Edwards took down another address. What is this? More sequels to my little story?"

"Notice: Mynheer Bam will run the famous horse Kutuhof, lately the property of H.E. The Governor, at the summer meeting at Green Point Common on Monday."

If all these links seem dull and unnecessary they fit into the quaint machinery that landed Edwards once more a convict in New South Wales, drove Surgeon Major Barry away from Cape Town, influenced the despotic governing of Lord Charles, and made Miss Georgiana Somerset and Aletta Van Breda play bigger rôles in the jeu d'amour et de hazard than is often given to two young women to attain.

The beginning of it all is, that Edwards finished his pamphlet that evening in the George Inn. It was destined to work much mischief, and afterwards,

when it was dark he went to a big barn outside the boundaries of the town below the Craig batteries on the Devil's Peak, to dance at the Rainbow dances, where he met the melancholy Dirk Zorn and heard the story of Marie Focus and Sana.

Edwards had grievances against all Governments, and Dirk and Marie specialized in theirs, therefore Lord Charles Henry Somerset would soon have further difficulties to face, which for a gentleman who was a better judge of a horse than any man in England, Johnny Mytton included, was a case of a Tory Government getting a good man in a bad place. Tory Governments have so often demanded great sacrifices of their disciples; but then to make Colonies and to keep them is an achievement of a nation, and is independent of Governments, who have been known to play battledore and shuttlecock with half a continent; and the winds of the moment had a good deal to do with it.

Unfortunately, His Excellency, colonizing hard and making his boundaries sure, introduced good horseflesh at the same time. Such surplus of talent upset many Tories who suffered from the overdeveloped sentiment of the Whigs. A man who reared race-horses, and suffered missionaries with a bad grace, especially those who embraced the black man living on the borders, who wished to control the Press in a small Colony where jealousies

made politics, who rewarded the Dutch loyalists (or disloyalists, whichever way you take it) and drank coffee in their homes in the West, while hundreds of sturdy Scotchmen and English settlers were trying to plow the African veldt as if it were an English field, in the East (having had land and plows provided for them) well, analysis of such a character only ended in the way such contradictions do: when one is up against a wall one can't see over, one curses, or else begins to knock it down.

CHAPTER V

The Governor Explains the Motto in the Language of a Gentleman

The Governor leant back in his chair and cursed. No man in England or out of it cursed better, longer, or louder than Charles Henry Somerset.

These were some of the reasons for the cursing. Some of them appeared in a former chapter; all to do with an inconsiderate Home Government, starving emigrants and such like, and to these were now added worse news reported by Bird, Colonial Secretary, news of hurricanes in Algoa Bay, discontent and disaster in the new Eastern Province town of Grahamstown, where poor Harry Rivers — God help him — was endeavoring to work miracles among the emigrants with some loaves and a few small fishes. A band of proselytizing missioners, with hearts where their brains ought to have been, were disturbing the volcanic frontier, where much British money and a few frontier settlers held peace and some order. His own son, Major Somerset, wrote from Grahamstown that he would rather cope with the discontented Boers than with this low lot of grumbling emigrants —" hardly a one can shoot or guide a plow," he wrote, " and they are encouraged by a low Scotch poet who thinks

himself a Bobbie Burns [1] . . . to say nothing of a would-be gentleman named Burnett, who, on arrival, insulted Reynolds, and wrote the enclosed on poor Harry Rivers — who I should advise you to release of his thankless task. Also this same Burnett having been helped in his farming — God save the mark! — is busy writing complaints which may reach the Government."

Somerset read the couplet:—

"On an inflated account of the Rivers in South Africa."

"While floods unfathomed o'er the Globe abound
Our Afric rivers all are shallow found:
But here each stream assumes an upstart flow
From puddles — brooks — from brooks what Rivers grow!
The great Fish swells with Amazonian pride
And Kowie rolls a Mississippi tide.
Delightful fancy! That can thus bewitch
And pour a Ganges through a Stagnant ditch
Spreads a vast lake where turbid streams arise
And give to wastes the beauties of the skies
Bait a camp-kettle for a fry of fish,
And . . . dam an irrigation at a wish!

"Poor Harry Rivers! so the land is not opulent enough for these damned settlers. It seems that Nature in Africa is profusely lavish only to its women and its sheep, for I have nowhere seen fatter ones. But we must see to this lampoonist."

[1] Thomas Pringle.

The Governor turned to more grumblings when Georgiana, in a riding habit, tripped into his room. She sat herself on the edge of his table. His "Well, Miss," opened the conversation, which bubbling for some hours in the bowl of Miss Somerset's brain, took little time to fizzle out.

"Charles Henry Excellency, do I give a man four dances twice a month to be insulted? Little devil! He made me break several most valuable engagements —" a tear trickled becomingly down her cheek —" and then when I ask him to explain his ridiculous motto —" and here followed a very one-sided and somewhat prejudiced account of the bone that was flung to the dog.

"My dear, be calmed! What all you charmers see in Barry, for the life of one I can never imagine. What a sad sight, indeed, when a sober little man will put on the appearance of a rake. Bless me, a man has only to assume the dress of a rake, drink a little too much without being a sot, and the whole lot of you — the wise Georgiana included — come tumbling down, virtuously — crossly — as it suit you. Well, my dear, what am I to do? Introduce my precious Inspector General to Father Stick and his six children — which shall it be? Cat o' nine tails? Ropes and Strap? Cane? Ferrule — or the Birch, to suit this naughty young thing?"

Georgiana's brows brooded intolerance of the

joke. "I am extremely anxious," she said, "to be taught the exact translation of the word 'Sottise.' Tell me what the whole silly thing means? Il ne faut jamais faire des sottises à demi."

"You are right, me dear, and well said — a silly thing. And if you are wanting a familiar equivalent: 'When you get into the divil of a pickle, be damn plucky enough to see it through to the end.' Poor little Barry!"

The Governor added these irrelevant words and started another thought in his daughter's brain.

"Charles Henry Excellency, the Dutch Theater, tired of the 'Mysteries of Udolpho,' are seeking a new Comedy calculated for the perts of the place. I have it: 'A Dialogue between father and daughter'; very sprightly, a little sprinkling of something bitter in it — sparsely sprinkled — not too much, in keeping with fatherly advice and filial obedience, for the authors fear that they could easily throw down distinction — eh? Is it true, Charles beloved, that you have sold Kutuhof to old Bam? Why? I love Kutuhof. Aletta says Dirk Zorn said you had a passably good quid pro quo. But then Dirk Zorn knows all the Cape gossip. I have my suspicions how he comes by it, too. Papa, is it a true story — that tale of Marie Focus, the slave?"

"Damned true, my lady: but better colonists have

died before justice has been done them. How would you have it otherwise, Georgie? Things are reported to the Home Government; in six months time they reply, and in a new country six months counts. It was the same pretty little business in the Amsterdam Council days. All grievances, etc., were reported to Holland or Batavia. Sometimes a year later they sent a Commissioner to settle things — but that seldom happened, and then there was divil a bit to settle. In six months people forgot what their grievance was."

"Not Marie. She works in the Zorn vineyards and her daughter Sana was with the Bams. Papa, Dirk Zorn was mysterious about Sana. What a boy for mysteries! He is secretive of all but of his devotion to Aletta, and she will not look at him. He even hints things of Dr. James!"

Lord Charles' keen blue eyes left those of his daughter. "Ah — things of Barry. M'dear? You surprise me!"

"Aletta says Dirk —"

"Oh, damn Dirk: really, Miss, your conversation is worthy of a kitchen maid — Dirk this and that — Aletta this and that. Mysteries! Suggestions! Would that I could haul up all the damned liars in this town, or supply honest labor to give 'em something to talk of. Jove! I'm working out my share of Hell in this foul-mouthed Colony. I am almost

persuaded to encourage freedom for the slaves, and make all these lazy potentates do some of their own labor. Georgie, when Mr. Keppel leaves, we pack up and go to the Round House with the horses, my girl. In fact we will go this month."

Georgiana clapped her hands. "Hurrah! Hurrah! the darling Lion's Head above us with its crown of silver trees: the Round House nestling in the firs like a big white pigeon, and the sea below! Oh, Charles Excellency, how I love this land. We'll take Dr. James, won't we? and Aletta, and Captain Cadogan for Aletta to flirt with."

"And for you, my lady?"

Georgiana's mouth pursed into the smallest affair in the world, the lids of her blue eyes drooped at the corners —

"Ah, Mr. Keppel might be persuaded to ride with the Poulett ladyship, leaving His Excellency to the appreciative Georgiana. Dear fussed one —" and she laid her head on his arm —"what are lampoons and colonists and slaves and gossips but things to escape from, on the back of good horses — escape to the mountains — to the sea. Aletta says Dirk says — oh dear Heavens, there I go. . . ." She bent and whispered —"that Dr. James knows the Mountain well, and spends some hours every day exploring. It has so inspired Captain Cadogan that he has accepted a wager from Mr. Breda to ride

up and down Table Mountain. Impossible, of course, and I fear Aletta will not even weep over his mangled body — an unpleasant prospect — oh Excellency! We have promised to drink coffee at Orangezicht some day before the wedding —"

"I danced last night with the bridegroom — oh, la! la! — he spoke much of his lady, called her by most endearing epithets! Imagine the man who I was to marry telling me that I was as fat as a pig! and I hearing it with pleasure and appreciation! But I am not sure that my other Dutch partners were more brilliant! Dirk Zorn danced opposite in a quadrille and sulked as much as to be noticed, while Captain Josias entertained me with small talk on the value of a rix dollar. Josias can be exceedingly heavy. But your clock goes wondrous fast. I hoped to have time to tell you that I should cure this petit-maître of his mistake, and turn my valuable attention to something bigger."

As she left the room Captain Josias Cloete, very pink in the face, very much military and otherwise secretary, standing in the doorway, went three shades pinker.

"Mr. Keppel dines here to-night, Sir," he stammered.

"Ah, yes . . . zounds! It's time to dress. Here, Georgie love . . . my respects to her ladyship, and tell her the dinner is en garçon. We shall

look to see you all afterwards . . . and have you been hunting?" noticing her dress for the first time.

"Yes," said Somerset, "cannot you persuade your dear Dutchmen to support the club? If it were not for our decaying Indians it could not go on." She passed out with this little hit at Josias.

Somerset looked at Cloete. Very tall, very fair — having no appearance of a rake, being a Dutchman.

"Eh?" he said.

"Oh," said Captain Josias, four times pinker: the degrees of comparison were unlimited.

The Governor's turn came again. "It's a damned pity you Dutchmen cannot achieve to look more like rakes. You can swear well, Josias; the devil, it's true, turned himself into an angel of light to achieve his purpose; but go and borrow the waistcoat and cravat of the devil! Appear my good Josias as half a devil, and upon further enquiry, be discovered either a male virgin or appear to possess mistresses and popollies galore, to prove virtue in parting from them; then will your lady condone worse offenses — ha, ha,— a male virgin or a moderate rake. Here's advice for you, my dear Josias — you lazy pining Dutchman. Here am I at fifty-seven as I was at twenty-nine, noted for addresses and successes on three hundred and fifty occasions — a little too many, perchance, for a moderate rake!

Go thou and do likewise, and turn the attentions of Miss Georgie from my little surgeon. Indeed, Josias," and Lord Charles got up and gave his hand to his tall aide, "I should feel damned grateful to you if you should succeed."

Josias stammered. "I have not the remotest chance, Sir, I fear there are too many suitors. There was, Sir, some slight — er — understanding, but my absence in the island of Tristan d'Acunah has not been advantageous."

Josias Cloete, destined to play a queerly dignified rôle in military history, in the quiet days that succeeded Waterloo was the son of a large estate owner in Cape Town. As quite a boy he had been sent to Holland and England for his education. Education then was almost nil, and very little effort was made by the parents to supply the deficiency for their children, even where tradition existed in a family. It was a common enough thing to find among the Colonists, Dutch, French, and English, the rapid deterioration of a family that had sailed from home with, if not definitely coronets on their silver, good enough blood and tradition to justify this extravagance. All sense of family pride was not lost, but the trouble of keeping up tradition, of the personal teaching of good manners, even of the ordinary civilized standards of convention, were apparently too much for the English colonists, who

quickly sank to the measure of the old Dutch settlers, whose hard existence, and oppression, by their own East India Government, had produced only the essentials and fundamentals of life with none of its pleasanter adoptions. Also, the original Colonists descended from the Company's servants, had little or no blood or breeding to start on. The children, often without education, were left much to the society of slaves, and rapidly deteriorated, catching the little sly tricks and shady ways of the slave. Much church service, and the strap, never spared, only hurt more definitely natures that were very strong and brains strengthened by open air and little mental effort.

But a few families preserved their traditions, with certain inherited lands. Wandering unfrocked "predikants" or drunken English exiles taken into the family and fed, supplied a certain vestige of culture, and as soon as the boy was of a certain age, he was shipped off to Holland or England for his education. This was the mistake. . . . Only very occasionally the girls were sent as well.

Josias Cloete, born at Government House in the Dutch days of Governor Sluysken, was sent to Holland at the age of nine, on a Dutch East Indiaman. To escape the strict patrol of the Channel, they flew the Prussian colors and sailed for Emden. After five years' private education in Utrecht, Josias

was ordered by his father to proceed to the Military College at Marlow. The Cape was now in the hands of the English, and Josias had excellent introductions.

Josias often told the story of his amazing journey to England, the heavy penalties of Napoleon's non-intercourse decrees made every scheme and precaution necessary. Hidden under layers of "turf" or bricks of peat, used as fuel in Holland, in company with a Frenchman and Comte Griefenille, from a small fishing smack they landed at Yarmouth. Then, in a coach to London to the Green Dragon in Bishopsgate Street. Josias spoke practically no word of English, but his father's new friends took charge of him and he was taken to St. James' Palace by Colonel Grant and presented to the Duke of Cumberland, the Regent's uncle and one of the Governors of Marlow College. "Butcher" Cumberland swore that Marlow was a "damned bad school," and that his own regiment, the 15th Hussars, was a far better one. A few days later, the Dutch boy found himself a Cornet in a crack English regiment.

Years later, dancing one night at Brighton, he saw Georgiana and obtained an introduction to Lord Charles who had just been appointed Governor of the Cape. Never doubting his star, Cloete managed two interviews, resulting in a request from Somerset to accompany him and his family to the Cape,

as his A.D.C. But now, after long service this was the first time that the Governor had ever definitely ordered or encouraged him to go in and win, and Josias knew that for the moment he had not a chance.

CHAPTER VI

How They Dine Mr. Keppel, and of a Toast Given at the Dinner

At nine o'clock that evening Surgeon-Major James Barry dined at the Government House.

The guest of honor was Lieut. the Honble. George Keppel on his way to India.

To meet him came the Lord Chief Justice, he of the undecided nose — Truter; the Rev. C. Latrobe, on a visit of missionary inspection at the Cape; Colonel Bird and Mr. Alexander, Colonial Secretaries, Colonel Crawford and some officers from the Castle, Burgher Zorn of Leeuwenhof estate on the slopes of the Lion Mountain; some other officials, with the staff, made up the party. The dining-room opened on to a long, tiled verandah overlooking the gardens, and the "Avenue," the Vauxhall of Cape Town, to-night all en fête, was hung with lights and decorated by all the prettiest women. The dark silhouette of the mountain reared above all this light and laughter, like some brooding wise-souled Sphinx, baffling, yet suggestive.

The "Avenue" that stretched the long mile from

the top of the Heerengracht canal to the foot of the Mountain, planted by Van der Stel, the Dutch East Indies great and clever Governor, divides the "Company's House" and the "Company's Gardens." Van der Stel brought from Java the great-leafed oak of the East, so different to the small fussy-leafed oak of England; its leaves resemble more the Roman chestnut. One of the shadiest spots in the Town, its branches had sheltered the amazing pageant that included in its rolls so many of the greatest or most interesting names in history, that one is perplexed to find no trace of their footsteps on the soil round their massive trunks. . . . Wellington himself, idol of the English people at this time, had in fact, lived in Cape Town: Lord Mornington, the Viceroy, on his way to and from India: Crippled Macartney, the Governor, with the entertaining wife of his Secretary Barnard, the Lady Anne — a Lindsey, and the writer of the popular ballad "Auld Robin Grey": she at least drew new blood from the half-awakened land of her exile, and to Prime Minister Melville, perhaps to her more than friend, she sent letters that combine those of a skilled diplomat sending reports with those of a witty clever woman who found some consolation in playing lead to a small audience, snatching herself and her reputation, so to speak, from the fires of astonished London Society which scarcely tolerated an unmarried Ré-

camier: therefore, Hester Standhope found herself playing at being Queen among the Arabs, and Lady Anne Lindsey married young Mr. Barnard, and played, as I say, Lead to the Frivoles of the Avenue Vauxhall: she left faint traces of her small sandalled feet.

Then little greatheart Harry Smith and stout Juanita, his Spanish wife, graced the Company's House: further back still, the cursing, splendid General, Davie Baird: to return again, that splendid flaneur, blaguer, the Revolutionary Explorer, Le Vaillant, who traveled, not too far, and carried a make-up worthy of a Courtier at Versailles, making long, oratorical discourses to the astonished savages he encountered. Earlier yet, Drankenstein, Lord High Viceroy of the Netherlands in the East; Captain Cook of England, who partook of good Constantia wine on his way round the world — and so on and so on. A goodly company, too; a goodly company to have left so little trace!

The Avenue Fêtes in the days of Lady Anne Barnard very nearly wrecked the Cape homes where political derision was rife. Anne writes in her letters that all the wives of the Dutch burghers danced away merrily with the Staff and the Garrison in the Avenue, while their husbands stood in Heerengracht and cursed their partners.

Mr. Keppel met Miss Somerset on his way down

to the drawing-room. Such a girl! pink, radiantly pink, like a Huguenot rose. Her high-waisted frock of gauze looped with myriad little rose-buds, she suggested the ideal heroine, with her face and her nature belieing it all the while. The twist of her nose matched the twist of her witty little brain. You started to cope with your pink and cream heroine, and were floundering rapturously (were you over forty), in surprises, and for those who thought to catch a whale with a trout-fly,— well, let us mix our metaphors and talk of roses with thorns — wild clambering briar roses that entangle you in their delicate meshes. There you have a suggestion of this girl Georgiana. Mr. Keppel preferred her ladyship (No. 2), who was a Poulett, and rode straighter than any woman he knew — (he'd known her for some time) — she rode straight in the sense of finding no fence too big if she wished to get to the other side. If Charles Henry kept up his form and gave her a lead, he supposed! But supposition was interrupted by slighted Georgiana who was looking pretty for nothing.

"I wish you good evening," she said.

"Ah, coming down?"

"Not to dine," she replied.

"What? Are we to be deprived of all the graces at this feast?"

She smiled. He wasn't too dull. "No — not to dine — but —" she lowered her voice with her little finger on her lips, edging with a familiar little movement towards him. "But I'm coming to listen."

"To listen! Zounds, madam — and pray is that to be confined to an unappreciative keyhole?"

"It is not a distinct habit; but I have a vast deal of interest in this party to-night. Pray Heaven, Sir, you will not hear me."

"Pray Heaven I could see you."

By this time the Poulett ladyship was far behind in the field, and he had begun to wonder what color Georgiana's eyes were in the daylight, and how he had failed to appreciate the bones of a woman's shoulder blades — for they rippled under Georgiana's thin white skin better than the sleek ribs of a thoroughbred — by Gad! she was thoroughbred this creature. . . . Therefore it is just as well that nervous Mr. Whitefoote, he who was editor, came along to take him off to the dinner table.

There the conversation started with the latest news from St. Helena, where Napoleon with failing breath had cursed Lowe and died, leaving ructions behind him.

Captain Cloete, just returned from the lonely island of Tristan d'Acunah, where a small garrison

had been sent for fear of further Elba achievements, was bubbling over with his new commission and the good "Constantia."

The episode of the rib and the bone started at the Governor's end of the table. Barry was in the midst of an outrageous yarn wherein he, as a swashbuckling, captivating hero, played havoc at the last Assembly ball.

"By my life," he chuckled, turning to Mr. Keppel, "Josias over there exults over having returned to civilization; he ought to apologize for not being dead. But think of it, sir, think of it! Two hundred women at that ball! and none of 'em disdainful, sir!"

Josias reddened. He had heard of Barry's many dances with Miss Somerset, even at that distant island of d'Acunah. Every one had heard the gossip of the ball held the night before in the Society House. Barry had been practically all the evening at the side of Georgiana or Lord Charles; therefore it was in bad taste to remark upon the affair at the Governor's table even under the guise of his total subjection of all the young women.

The Governor, who always seemed over ready to pass the quaint assertions (to say the least of them) made by Barry, turned the conversation, though not too obviously.

"Whitefoote tells me that there is a petition afoot to use the old Exchange for the Assembly Dances, the Exchange which," turning to Keppel, "in my pretty capital they call the Den of Thieves. They now wish to turn the Den of Thieves into a Temple for Terpsichore. Is not that the idea, Whitefoote?"

Mr. Whitefoot, from sheer force of habit was on the verge of translating this into plain English, and most diplomatic English, when Barry chipped in — appearing to address only Mr. Keppel; certain the entire company overheard his remarks.

"I have heard, sir, of a Temple being turned into a Den of Thieves; but on my life, sir, I cannot see why the reverse should not take place: to put it in plain English, turn out the money changers and the Den might become a very holy Temple!"

"'Pon my soul, if Barry doesn't see himself the High Priest," said the Governor.

But Barry was not to be suppressed.

"A monstrous pity to have given over the big Hall in the Slave Lodge to those jabbering lawyers."

Chief Justice Truter's nose turned a shade redder and turned enquiringly towards Barry.

"Allemachtig Doctorje! but that is my temple!"

"Full of thieves, full of thieves," murmured Barry. "Unharmonious harangues!" His peaked

little face wrinkled and crinkled into humorous lines and his blue eyes twinkled from across the table in answer to Truter's danger signal.

The inference might be of reference to the somewhat shady part played by his lordship at the taking of the Cape by the English, which rôle was not unremunerative to Truter.

Barry continued: "The Temple is full of young advocates declaiming vehemently in the Dutch language. By my life, the mind is almost deceived into a belief that they are arguing for Truth, and not for Pay."

Even the Chief Justice laughed, and Mr. Keppel could have sworn he heard a giggle at the keyhole.

"We shall soon have a greater commotion," the Governor continued, "and poor old Truter can be as deaf as be damned; we are to have our two languages, loving each other as brothers — Parrots and magpies chattering and echoing — Poor old Truter, another year and you will hear nothing of it, ha! ha! We'll have to pray Mynfrau Breda to come and help Truter — make her interpreter in chief. But, God bless my soul, here we are letting all our cats loose to Mr. Keppel, who will go back to the Pavilion Court at Brighton to feed the gang there with tasty morsels from my table. Anyhow, I have news of a Commission of Enquiry, headed by long John Bigge, coming to nose round. Garde

à vous, George, or you will be sent back to this land as a Special Spy."

Young Mr. Keppel laughed and turned the conversation: "'Twas a vastly pretty young woman we met to-day, Sir," he said to Somerset.

"We rode up to Nooitgedacht and had some wine with old Van Breda," said the Governor. "George asked for tea. Old Mynfrau threw eyes and hands to heaven. "Tea! Mij God! Tea! Baboons ask for tea — *men* take wine." So there we were, let in for a thorough soopje.[1] Aletta was looking very elegant — her curls pinned in a new fashion. She is a big filly; only about fourteen, I fancy. Breda tells me they call me the "Jockey Governor." Breeds quite good horse-flesh does old Breda; very fussed about his niece, Marie, pretty girl, too — marrying the Fiscal. You'll see the wedding, we all go. May and December sort of business — he is quite seventy — though I should not criticize!"

Barry interrupted.

"Never have I seen," he squeaked, "a more comfortable prospect of happiness."

"Why so?"

"Because, Sir, to all appearances she cannot fail of becoming a widow within six weeks at farthest."

Roars of laughter ran through the room, and

[1] Soopje — literally: a sup, or little dose.

Georgiana at the unappreciative keyhole, was sent hurriedly up the stairs to her own room shaking with badly suppressed giggles.

Barry's shrill falsetto rose above the din.

"And on my life, Sir, I have it on excellent authority that she is so good a hausfrau as to line her wedding clothes with black!"

"James! James!" from Lord Charles, "are these professional secrets? What will you be saying about me, I wonder?"

Barry jumped up and stood on his chair, a veritable "Invisible"— his high stock half covering the lower portion of his face — glass held high above his head.

> "When we come to a Governor
> Silence is best.
> So we'll tip him a Summerset
> And pass on to the rest."

"The rest! The rest!" roared the Company..

Josias Cloete rose, very red, very nervous, the opportunity was heaven-sent, as was the inspiration, for he was not given to over much wit.

"I toast Surgeon-Major James Barry —

> "Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
> Yet wit ne'er fosters, nor beauty ne'er enjoys;
> So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
> In mumbling at the game they dare not bite."

There was a weighty silence in the room. Keppel

hoped that Georgiana had not followed out her program. Cloete was too astounded at his insulting bravery to attempt to recover his presence of mind. Barry's face suggested pea-green. The Governor came to the rescue.

"A pretty compliment that for Psyche, eh, Barry?"

But even Somerset's wit could not help. It was so obviously not meant as much for the dog as for the master. It hit to a nicety the insidious attentions, always ending in some petty squabble: ended too, with much apparent relief, from one side at least, it hinted at something fantastic and unordinary in Barry's nature, something to be shied at before one fell under the acknowledged spell of his personality.

Barry replied slowly, staring hard at big Cloete.

"Mister Cloete,"— emphasizing the prefix — "Mister Cloete has profited by his short stay at Tristan d'Acunah and has had time to learn a yard or two of Mr. Pope's fine satires. I will discuss them with Mister Cloete to-morrow morning."

It seemed ridiculous, yet there was reason enough. Once before this sort of thing had happened with less definite cause, and Barry had fought a duel with a military Doctor suffering from jaundice, on half pay from the East; he had established himself in a thatched woodland cottage on the Newlands slopes

of the mountain and had as housekeeper a strapping young Dutchwoman —a widow, and not averse to all such gentle arts as could relieve the boredom of this jaundiced companionship. Barry found it a convenient rest house on his rides over the Bosheuvel Silver Tree crowned hill, on his way to the Military Hospital at Wynberg. The strapping widow being as inquisitive as the dear Wadman who loved Uncle Toby, found reason to find excuses to her lord and master, who though jaundiced was also jealous; these excuses tended to suggest Barry as a harmless "little nincompoop," "popinjay," "doctorling," and nothing much else. They satisfied the jaundiced one, who flung them at Barry the next time he called for a "soopie" and started his lackadaisical advances to the fair widow.

There was a duel and the jaundiced one was pricked. This happened near "Alphen," the Cloete homestead, where the Governor was staying for some shooting. The sequel to it, some say, though the author of the tale was never traced, was that the Governor sent for Barry and what sounded like a stormy interview followed — and then, goes the story, a long, stout arm seized the little man who was near the window and the same arm suddenly thrust the yelling Surgeon through the window, dangling him over a bed of hydrangeas until he prayed for mercy.

CHAPTER VII

In This Chapter, You Read of How King Solomon Hoodwinked Sheba, and of How Little Things Set a Light to Suspicion

In the inspired book called the Koran is written a queer tale, which shows the great Wisdom of Solomon, and the great curiosity of a man.

It has the misfortune to take these two traits and produce an unpleasant little scheme by which poor Sheba betrayed commonsense, and a good deal more than she meant to. It is by clever little simple-seeming schemes that we trap wild animals, and even the intelligence of the wisest woman could not rise above instinct, which is, in women, stronger than vanity — though it may make you pause one moment to consider it. And this is the story of how the great King Solomon hearing a rumor he wished to prove, forced the great and wise Sheba, to show him, in the early stages of their acquaintance more than she had probably ever meant to.

"There is no physical flaw in this woman," said Solomon. And naturally there was some one to confute this, for what woman can hope to smuggle even a pinhead of disfiguration through life, unobserved? Therefore, a eunuch had it from a

jealous harem lady or a favored slave, that Sheba certainly had one defect, and that her legs would betray it — for instead of possessing legs as beautiful as her face and arms, they were covered with dark and thick hair. And Solomon vowed to make sure. Sheba was, up to then evidently, a Queen of all virtues. So Solomon prepared a great banquet and invited Sheba. But he caused the great hall that led to the banqueting chamber to be covered with glass and flooded. The water ran deep — knee deep, and a few Koranic measures more deep, and Sheba being a woman, held up her gold and purple and fine linen from the water, and Solomon shuddered! — for the story was indeed true!

That Sheba triumphed in spite of this little affair, is not alone of the Koran, and, that it goes to prove that it is in small matters of sex instinct, or vanity, that secrets are mainly betrayed, has somewhat to do with the present story — in which this chapter has important bearing.

Dirk Zorn sulked along the bad road that led beyond the town to the Rainbow Re-unions where the freed slave girls danced, and found fresh pastures. There he met Edwards, who having drunk much Cape brandy was ready to pour his stories into any ears.

As Zorn had as a foundation for suspicion the remembrance of Barry rushing towards the walled

garden with the little gate, it did not improve matters, when, into the midst of this rainbow crowd, strolled Barry, straight from the dining table where things had been left in none too peaceful an atmosphere. Mr. Keppel had come to see, and Barry was doing cicerone with all the impudence of what His Excellency would have called "a rip and a roué." Barry never danced, nor, indeed, spoke to the habitués of this big white barn, teeming with hot Dutchmen and young soldiers. These Rainbow Dances, so called from the mass of "color" assembled, were run by a half-caste Portuguese, "Knobbeltje" Vasco, a little ape creature with the tops of all his fingers off — bitten off by himself was the old story told by the Dutch Mamas to their naughty children for whom Vasco was a nightmare. Vasco, sometimes, when very full of brandy-wine would speak of days in the East when he had been taken in his small boat off the coast of Java by those odd people, more fish than flesh, the Klings. Some had come out of the water and some had crawled out from the forests, and he had lived with the Klings, much against his will, and they had cut off his fingers to help him swim better. It was a picturesque story. Anyhow his rôle in life was picturesque if not quite pleasant, and certainly very lucrative, for his large barn at Rhoodebloom near the Salt River was one of the first monuments of

National Importance, as some wag had described it. All the prettiest slave girls and half-castes frequented it twice a week, and all the cadets, and young landowners, and most of the English came in "to watch." Here were Hottentot girls, full-lipped, soft-eyed, soft-voiced small women, with the disfiguring tuft-like, tight hair hidden away under gay handkerchiefs; here were tall goddess-like Mozambique women, with naked limbs, perfect as classic statues, their soft Indian muslin garments draped and folded round them like chitons and togas: Madagascans with long silky hair; half-caste Javanese in bright colored sarongs: Cape-Malay women, exquisitely-made, dainty creatures, with lustrous dark eyes blackened, henna-stained finger nails, yellow or green silk head handkerchief drawn low and square over the brow, suggesting the Eastern veil, but ending short at the neck and tied in a knot; their gorgeous silk dresses gathered full round them, and an embroidered gaudy shawl crossed over their beautiful busts, leaving their arms and necks exposed. These were the pick of the Rainbow Dances: clever and sweet voiced and lithe, never doing hard work — deft laundresses, expert cooks or ladies' maids. A liaison with a Malay girl was of almost domestic importance and lasted years, as their hold over their masters was as subtle and clever as themselves; almost the height of satisfac-

tion was reached by the Burgher who could say that he had a Dutch wife and a Malay mistress.

The great barn to-night was lit by big bronze lanterns hanging from oak beams, isolated lamps leaving dark corners where the bright eyes of the Rainbow ladies shone like fire-flies.

Zorn nudged the arm of the ex-convict.

"That is the man I told you of," pointing to Barry.

"Why, I would stake my life that *that is a woman. That* looks more like a woman than a man!"

"A woman, man, you are mad. That is the celebrated "Cape Currey," who lives the life of a . . ."

"I heard yesterday that the Governor's daughter was willing to smile upon any kind of suit proposed by Barry," said Edwards.

"Suit!" laughed Zorn. "I tell you, man, he is a deeper character than Cape Town imagines. Keeps an establishment on the slopes of the mountain where he rides every day. The strange part is, that nothing is suspected, as his manners and habits have given him the name of 'Madame Barry.' I tell you, man, I have watched this house in the woods. Twice a week an old slave goes down to the town to buy supplies, but as he is a deaf mute there is nothing to be gained from him."

"Thick as thieves with the Governor?" from Edwards.

"It is rumored that the Governor keeps Barry as a chief spy — There! Look! See that girl dancing there —?" Zorn seized Edwards' arm.

A tall, slim, colored girl passed them, in the arms of a well-known merchant.

"That is the ex-slave Sana, owned by the Governor, bartered from Bam as Poplolly they say, in exchange for one of the best bred mares the Colony has ever seen. Her mother is one of our slaves. She was the woman who betrayed the Dutch treasure at the time of the Capitulation.— Found in my Lord Chief Justice's cellar! Pretty little days that my lord fails to remember now. The English forgot to reward her — or else were afraid that it might not be in keeping with the conciliation of my lord Truter. Marie Focus has not forgotten this. She has a suspicion that Sana too is included in this game of a mare for a slave or a new shooting box. Of course, the Governor's pose is highly clever — would improve the breed of horses among us farmers — grants himself land to show us how to grow wheat and coffee — grants land to help fill the Treasury and the family coffers I should venture to say. Old man Pietrus Marais — he used to be very interested in these exchanges — found himself landed with two worthless farms in the Caledon district.

Just the last race day, the Governor driving, passed Pietrus, sweating hard, walking from the Downs. The Governor stopped his carriage.

"May I take you in, Pietrus?"

"Nie wat! Governortje. I have been taken in twice to-day already — and other days too," said old Pietrus.

"Damme! and what have you done, Pietrus?" said the Governor, winking at his aide-de-camp.

"Allemachtig Governortje, I have been finely done! — and other times before to-day," said old Pietrus, all the time speaking very slowly, so that all round could well hear.

"So the Commission of Enquiry arrives in a few weeks' time?" Edwards swallowed his third glass of Cape "dop" brandy. "They shall hear some amusing things during their stay. Burnett, the settler, has worked his part in England, paving the floor of Lord Bathurst's room with his letters and protests — in none too simple language either, and when I commence in the very Free Press in this town — good-by to Somerset, Somerset and Co.— though I fancy it may be harder to move the son than the father. Here, another glass, Dirk Zorn! to liberty! and freedom!" Edwards gulped and spluttered over the strong stuff and seizing the waist of a pretty Malay girl, pulled her on to his

knees. "I takes the dark girl on my knee," he hummed and fell to kissing her to the tune of the Marseillaise.

"Sis! man! I hate the smell of a Malay girl's hair; Klapper oil — foulest smell on earth."

Zorn got up, disgusted with this exhibition of freedom and liberty. Dirk Zorn in this story fills that difficult rôle of "idiot tragique": for him ideals were not to be tolerated in the filthy smell of cocoa-nut oil.

Sana, the slave girl, walked by, swaying from the hips, lithe and supple. She glanced contemptuously at the Malay girl on Edwards' knee, with her stiff pompadour satin skirts, which half buried the pair in their rigid masses — the dress of the Malays seemed more monstrous in the skimp and scant 1820 days. Sana, with the svelt figure of the half-caste, looked like a bronze Tanagra dancing girl, three or four meters of Indian muslin to veil her charms and a chain of heavy dull amber binding her black hair.

"Malay trash!" she murmured as she repassed Edwards and the girl.

The words maddened Edwards, already more than half drunk, he pushed the Malay girl away and seized Sana by her naked bronze arms. She spat in his face.

"Sana doon't have doings by notaries and con-

victs! Sana belongs by die Governeur: Hottentots iss for your kind of peoples."

Edwards had her by the throat before she could say another word, and cried out that here was the Governor's poplolly: then the room seemed suddenly enchanted — the crowd, gathered round the principals of the fracas seemed possessed by devils; some started sneezing, others snorted and coughed, others spluttered and gulped and cursed, tears streamed down black and white faces alike; tempers rose; the fracas, which seemed to develop into a big business frizzled out into personal physical desire to escape. Blinded by pain, dust, and tears, Edwards loosened his hold on Sana.

"Tut, tut, get away, girl," he heard some one say, and caught at the speaker — the big lantern had been knocked out in the scuffle. "Now my lord — keep clear of this — shut your eyes — there my man!" The speaker freed a hand and waved more dust into the awful atmosphere.

"God! it's pepper!" yelled Edwards, mad with pain. His grip on the creature he held tightened.

"What the devil are you up to, Barry?" Mr. Keppel groped blindly through the clouds of pepper. "This is no man's game. Why not have left the fellow to me?"

Edwards' arm stiffened round the little Doctor's body. Some one screamed shrilly.

"Stop it! You are hurting me! Ah, thanks!" Barry struggled into the air on Mr. Keppel's arm.

"Some one shut the door, otherwise we should have been all right. There might have been mighty unpleasant things with that drunken notary; as it is, nobody is certain what happened, and every one has hit every one else — no one run through; and that little black bitch out of it all. No."— in answer to Mr. Keppel's question —" No word of this will be heard, George, except at the Society House where all scandals and lies are bred, and carry no weight. Besides it was quite dark. I knocked down the lantern at that end of the room immediately. That Edwards is a well-known sweep, and is in league with all the discontents of the place, and I feared the consequences if anything was too located. His Excellency's name is none too sacred at the present moment."

They jumped into the high Cape cart, waiting for them, with Black Jan driving, and rattled down the mountain slope towards the Castle. The cart jolted over the rough ground; every now and then Mr. Keppel had a whiff of the havoc-wroughting red pepper. He sneezed.

"Pardon!" said Barry; "some of the stuff still about me."

"Do you always carry this, Barry?"

"No: but it's safer to do so. One never knows

when one may want protection and I am not natty with my fists I fear; my sword would certainly perform murders on its own account, did I not carry a safer weapon."

After the Rainbow crowd had melted into the outer world, Edwards found Dirk Zorn on the stoep of the Hall, wiping his eyes.

"Mij machte, but that was a verdomte trick! Who did it? I could not see. Why, he did not knock you down, the verdomte coward?" For answer, Edwards pulled something from his pocket. "Some one dropped this — you understand? That is to say it dropped into my hand out of the pocket of some one I held — some one who screamed like a woman — the thing you call 'Cape Currey.'"

He held up the hand-lantern which every one carried after dark at the Cape in those days. "See, on Government House paper and written to-night." He read it slowly. "God!" he muttered, "God, what a find!" He tore up the paper. "The thing has given me an idea, Dirk Zorn, and a better weapon than all Burnett's evidence. We'll rid the country of our gentleman horse-dealer and his damned concubines and minions."

They started their long walk back to the town. A strong wind beat against them and the light of their lanterns were mere flickering matches of light.

Edwards tripped heavily over something which

lay in the pathway, something that cried and moaned, and was silent again. Dirk Zorn turned the feeble lantern light on to the obstacle.

"Marie Focus! What the devil do you here?"

"Is it true, then, Master Dirk — true all the stories told of Sana — Ooi! Fooi! Fooi! My girl dancing in that verdomte place. I heard things, Master Dirk: many people, all talking loudly as they went past to the town! Ooi! Ooi!" The moaning and the crying continued.

Edwards whispered to Dirk Zorn. To him, Marie Focus was an important witness and for his scheme a machine of the gods.

They took the poor, weeping slave between them, along the rough mountain pathway, in the teeth of the cold northeast wind, to Edwards' lodging, in a low Malay house, on the beach at Salt River near the Fort Knoccke.

And this is the origin of the famous and scandalous placards that were surreptitiously hung in the Heerengracht.

CHAPTER VIII

A Duel, and the Governor Betrays Undue Anxiety

It was a short and queer business, this duel that had been arranged at the Keppel dinner.

Cloete chose a quiet enough spot, among some oleanders and palms in the old " Company's " gardens, opposite Government House, and brought the nervous Whitefoote as a second. Barry appeared with Black Sam and Psyche at ten minutes past the hour, with a note in his pocket written by Lord Charles at two o'clock of that morning, begging — well, here is what the Governor wrote: " My dear —— You are going to make a damned mistake. I trust you will drop this excessive folly. I fancy that personal feeling should be considered: and then my position, to say nothing of your own. Cloete is a fighting cock and not such a fool as he looks. There may be the devil to pay.— C.S."

Cloete spoke afterwards of his feeling like an overheavy-weighted cock, matching himself against a young bantam lightweight scarce red on the comb. For all that, he pricked the pale little surgeon in the shoulder. Barry fainted. " Fell flat with a squeak! " Cloete confided to the trembling sec-

ond, who had had strict injunctions from Headquarters to see that nothing serious happened. As Barry fell, Cloete strode forward and ripped the tight uniform from his shoulder, cursed Barry for allowing no surgeon, and was about to settle the bleeding, when seeing Whitefoote salute, looked up, to find the Governor tramping at a great pace over a famous and prized bed of lilies, his face ashen, his tongue tied up in oaths that evidently fell like balm in Gilead to the wounded yard or so of uniform lying on the grass.

Barry called feebly to the Governor who bent down, picked up the frail body as he would have lifted Georgiana off her horse, and Whitefoote, and the purple-faced duellist Cloete watched His Excellency disappear along the maze of myrtle hedges carrying His Majesty's Surgeon in his arms.

"Why," stammered Mr. Whitefoote.

"That is monstrously near my own thought," replied Josias Cloete.

The Governor carried the little Surgeon gently and carefully the long length of the palm-screened Gardens that to this present day run parallel to the glorious oak avenue, separating the gardens from Government House. All three had been designed as a whole by the Dutch East India Company in the early days, the Government House being the House of Rest or Entertainment for the Company's

guests on their way to and from the East: for in those days the Governor still lived at the old Fort, or in the newer Castle lying in the sands between the Parade Grounds and the sea. So there was little or no chance of others than Josias and Whitefoote seeing the Governor carrying with such evident tenderness his small Surgeon, for they had but to cross the Avenue and walk into the private gardens of Government House. But the long low house with its many long windows and balconies faced the gardens, and Georgiana saw them as they crossed the little red bridge over the wide deep sluit or ditch hedged by blue plumbago flower. As they passed the sentry at the high iron gates, she realized something unforeseen had happened. Her father's warning words, Barry's coldness, all forgotten, she dashed down the wide stairs through the ball-room on to the verandah where she met them, Barry bleeding and insensible, Lord Charles grim-faced.

"Georgie, do not make a fuss. He's hurt, but not badly." He placed Barry gently down on a low seat made of teakwood and thongs of soft hide.

"Stay here while I get water and seek his servant."

She knelt beside him watching the blood gently welling and oozing from the tiny hole in the tightly buttoned uniform. It was a ridiculous habit — he had done it before — this fighting in his tight uni-

form. One of his oddnesses, and so accepted. Suddenly Barry coughed, and thinking him choking, all trembling, she opened the high collar. Charles Henry would come soon, for by her life she vowed he looked like death. The choking noise continued and Barry's hands tore at the tiny hole where the blood came from.

She felt the pressure was hurting him and undid the tight jacket. A coarse linen towel appeared to be wrapped tightly round the body.

"How odd!" and then she thought, "why, how monstrous tight and unpleasant," and then —"he will suffocate, surely." Still the Governor delayed: seconds seemed minutes. She tore open the linen wrapping, but another fold appeared; then she went very white, her eyes rivetted, her brain and intelligence paralyzed. God knows what definite thought framed itself. Perhaps only suspicion, perhaps a tremendous shock and realization. All that she knew had been whispered or said of her father, in ghastly waves of heat and horror surged through her. Some mystery, unfathomable, something unusual, horrible. This creature, known so well to her, loved, and so tolerated in spite of snubs and biting witticisms, was not for her or for any woman.

This amazing edge of mystery complicated everything.

Her father, all that he had said or suggested, all that she had noticed or taken for granted, his concern, his affection! God! God! What could it mean! It was just perhaps her own awful imagination playing her tricks, sending her down into Hell to cope with her own suspicions. And even then, poor thing, she was some way from the truth. "It must be Charles Henry's mystery. His particular sottise — or am I mad and a bad daughter as well, for *such* imaginings!" The blood had made the linen wrappings quite red by now. So red that one could hardly tell it was not Barry's uniform. Her eyes filled with tears. She could not remember why she was crying. It was because of some horrid thing she had thought. Just a thought that had flown through her mind: it was because she had looked for so long on the red, on the white turning red, until even her own mind grew red; and anyhow it might even have been a dream, because when she could see again, and there were no more tears, she was still seeing something red; she touched it. It was soft and silky. . . .

"Dearest: my poor sweet," cooed Aletta. Then she, Georgie, laughed. She giggled, very feebly, like a woman who has been ill for a long time.

"Was it never blood?" she said. "I thought there was blood all over your red dress, Aletta, and

that you were kneeling beside some one who was bleeding."

She giggled again, and stopped as suddenly, for she did not remember having dreamed this. Her dream had had nothing to do with Aletta. So why was she telling Aletta this lie. But her mouth went on lying.

"And you held the bleeding body in your arms until some one showed you the bare skin, and that was horrible. Do you know, my love, I vow I don't know what I'm talking about. Am I ill, or mad?"

Aletta held her hand. "You have been ill for some days, Georgie. You fainted because His Excellency left you to look after Dr. James when he was slightly wounded by Captain Cloete. His Excellency found you lying, pale and stiff, beside the rimpje seat on the verandah. Captain Cloete carried you up here and they sent a messenger up to Orangezicht to fetch me."

So she had fainted and dreamed many horrors! It really did not matter now that she knew she had fainted. What a big relief it was! And yet she believed she knew she was telling Aletta a lie about her share in that extraordinary dream.

As consciousness and strength returned, which they did with amazing rapidity, the dream and her sensations became more muddled and misty. With

relief she would realize that it grew more and more impossible to piece the puzzle together. Little bits of sub-conscious horror remained; but only as blots, unreadable, on a clean sheet of paper.

Her father referred to the episode jestingly, "trying to play the surgeon herself: thought to stanch the scratch, and lost herself in the proceeding, poor daughter!" But his chuckle carried suspicion or a fear, with its half-heartedness.

Then, when she was again carried out on the sunlit balcony by Josias, Barry limped into the conversation, and bowed over her toes his grateful thanks for her exquisite sympathy, and added his suggestion which spoilt all his gratitude, that she should refrain from being in at the Death in future.

She experienced an odd feeling of almost antipathy for a moment. Only a moment. For again she was all laughter and prettiness; and a well-bred sensation of meanness overcame what she grew day by day to feel was but a bad dream.

CHAPTER IX

How One May Find Heaven in a Vineyard, and of How Things Are Not Only All They Seem

The Crawford children had strayed into the big Van Breda vineyard. They had gone, accompanying their mother and Michael Van Breda, to the new cellars, to watch the slaves wine-pressing. The first signs of their destiny were betrayed, for they each separately took silent oath that no drop of this foul-smelling liquid should ever pass their lips: only one exception! — at Marie's wedding, and then that would be for Aletta's sake, and they would do much for Aletta. Jane had been held by the hand of Michael and had stoically stood in the forefront, to witness the odd process.

The huge Madagascar wine-treaders with great beads of sweat rolling down their cheeks and their short white tunics of classical shortness, sleeveless, neckless and very less, terrified the prospective nuns: such human force! such suggestion of huge black ogres in Alibaba wine-vats! —" Baam Zonda, Baam Zonda, Zonda Bantu, Bogai Nagatu," sang the black Treaders, the slow heavy words marking time to each tread.

" Oh, la! la! " whispered Louisa, " the robbers! ";

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all their black heads popping up and down to the rhythm of their song. Then they sang, impromptu, of each nun, descriptively and kindly, but the nuns not speaking the queer slave talk,— which strangely enough many years later was to become the recognized language of a nation — shivered with fear, as each slow word rolled out of the ogres' mouths. Plush — plosh — plush — plosh, was the song of the trodden grape: then bubble, bubble, drip, drip, through the little pipe at the bottom of the vat: then — s-s-slish down an incline into the lower vat, to stand for days fermenting.

" Missie Baba com' see "; an enormous giant bent down out of the tub of Alibaba and gathered the miserable Jane in his long bronze arms. She found herself perched on shoulders high above seven other bronze ogres, with big singing mouths and multitudes —" millions and millions," said Jane, of enormous white teeth, glistening like tombstones on a starlit night; eyes, like black stars, glowed around her: all about her seemed to shine, yet all seemed dark: black vats, black men, dark, dark wine, repeated down the long length of the dark cellar. At the end of all this enormous blackness, all this noise and smell and heat, a round of light, a window high in the wall, showed her the brilliant sunlit vineyard, the bright red earth, the blue, blue cloudless sky.

The big giant swung her dexterously over the vat to the floor of the cellar — where Louise and Arabella fell on her as one returned miraculously from the dead; they straightened her little red bonnet, smoothed her hair, betrayed endless anxieties. "Let us go and eat whole ones, hundreds of grapes," she whispered. While Michael was deep in explanations to Mrs. Crawford, they crept towards the light of the vineyards.

Michael took time to tell how such wine, being as good as original Constantia, was now sold by the farmers by the lager —"dat is to say, one hondred an' fifty gallons for two hondred rix-dollars."

"Dear Mijnheer, it is no good telling me that. I can never find myself possessed of sufficient fingers to be able to turn rix-dollars into pounds."

"Your pardon, Ma'am. Two hundred maak fifteen pound of your money; but den it is sold again in London for forty pound for only one hondred and ten gallons! But die big farmers be dere own agents. De boder is dat all farmers vant to grow vine; dey laugh at me ven I start to grow Merino sheep by my Caledon varms, dey laugh moch more ven I start to grow korfee in die gardens here; an' even ven dey see it pay me, vat dey do? dey do plant more vine sticks! Mi! mie! it is very heavy to be a person — Jaa!" [1]

[1] Literal translation of a Cape Dutch proverb.

" Oh, Mijnheer, it is far more trying and far more unprofitable to possess daughters."

Mrs. Crawford, with the familiarity which blinds mothers to the possibility of their well brought-up children wandering too far from their side, did not even glance round to notice the disappearance of the three nuns. Not until she and her cicerone reached the house again, did she turn with words of command for the further guidance of Jane, Louisa and Arabella!

They were not there! All fussed and flurried she pounced upon Aletta: would the dear find the children; probably in the vineyards, and heaven alone knew what amount of grapes they must have eaten!

Aletta found the three vagrant Eves in various stages of demoralization; undisturbed even by their own well-trained British Consciences, they had ravaged like hungry spies through three large vineyards. Aletta tracked Jane, lying flat on her stomach, by a strange little red flannel binder hanging on a vine bush,— a binder such as infants wear. The Crawford girls always wore flannel next the skin,—" in anticipation of the hair shirt," as Dr. Barry remarked when he sounded their flat chests with the regularity of once a month, in category with the only dentist in all Cape Town who looked to their teeth, the only barber who cut their thin locks, and the

indigent lady who let out the monthly tuck from the economically devised garments, designed by Mrs. Crawford's mathematical mind for her rapidly growing young women.

From a further vine bush hung a pair of boneless holland corsets; and then came Jane, green in the face, almost naked, groaning the fact that clothes made no allowance for a sore stomach. A few yards away, Arabella and Louisa sat helplessly in a nest of half unhooked, unlaced, untied garments.

Taken as a whole, it was a picture of the most perfect protest ever exhibited by well-trained well-born English insides. Had the Crawfords been reasonable little animals or little bourgeoises — well, it would have been less of a draw, this fight with overtaxed nature! Aletta collapsed, and added the necessary last touch to their misery with shouts of sympathetic laughter.

Jane, with the awful calm of abated tempest, spoke.

"We are extremely uncomfortable, Aletta, and I fear we dare not move."

"Uncomfortable! Indeed you should be, you little pigs! — come, get up off the ground." Which order the Misses Crawford obeyed from sheer habit, and all three immediately complied unwillingly to the exigencies of nature, holding their little red bonnets before the "gross sight,"— so Jane called it

apologetically when all was over. Aletta began collecting the little garments from various parts of the vineyard. She took the girls into the shade of a big walnut tree. Probably it was the suggestion by Louisa of how she had attempted to cover the nakedness of Jane before succumbing herself, and that it being only Jane to be covered added but little to the interest of the episode, that from Bible fables they drifted to the stories of Pan and his woods, and the queer myths of Nature: the exact note sung and gurgled by the little scuttling stream that started life on the top of the mountain and rushed headlong down to the sea; of the way the smallest ambition realized only ended in being lost in a huge whole — whether it be sea or not: and the Misses Crawford forgot the forbidden vineyard and their painful penance, and begged for a story, and a story of real things, such as Aletta told — "not of People and Houses and Backboards and Punishment and Reward." Therefore Aletta lay on the ground with her face supported by her elbows, looked across the green Isthmus below, and told the wonderful story of how the Table Mountain became flat, because once, many years ago, Table Mountain was all in bumps and battlements like the Hottentot and Stellenbosch Mountains: and as this was the beginning of the story, the Misses Crawford all nodded and said: "and so?"

"And so," said Aletta, "the Veld Kings were at war with the Veld fairies who live in the river beds and near the big blue vleis —"

English Jane could not allow this to pass. "You should say lakes, Aletta: near the lakes."

"Oh, Jane, be silent," pleaded Louisa. "And so, Aletta, and so . . . ?"

"Well, the giants were big kind creatures, but as they had to fight, with their huge hands they built fortresses, the forts you call Mountains. Look across the Flats, at that long chain of Mountains — and to guard their land better they built a high pointed fortress almost in the sea: look above you, children."

"But Table Mountain is not pointed," mumbled Jane.

"The giants with monstrous big strides walked up and down their fortress by rough paths that we call Ravines. They fought for years, these jealous giants and fairies. Sometimes the fairies won the battles, and they would cut off the giants' toes and fingers and stick them on the tall reeds that grow round the vleis, which we now call bullrushes; then the giants became afraid and started to bury all their treasure of gold and copper and tin in the mountains.

"Then at other times the giants won, and took many fairies prisoners; but the fairies bribed the

Veld spiders to help them. The spiders spun fine webs, miles and miles of web, to catch the dew-drops, and as it was winter the dew-drops froze and became sparkling stones which the fairies collected, and gave to the giants for the ransom of the captives. When a giant was killed, he was buried just where he fell, a big mound was erected over him, and you see, that is why all over the Veld there are little and big Kopjes. Then the fairies thought they would make a very big fairy to look as much as possible like a giant, to help them against their big enemies. So one night, when it was very dark and only two stars in the heavens, they collected some clay from the river bed, and old pieces of bone from the skeletons of baboons and other animals, and made a giant creature, to be their friend! They made him a head like the top of a Kopje, and the hair was made of the tight little clumps of bush which grows on the Veld, and they made him fingers and toes of the round fleshy spikes of the juicy milk-bosch.

" But because they worked by night, the creature they made was quite black.

" At first the creature waged war with them, but one year, when it was too hot for war, the black giant fairy fell in love and married a daughter of the giants. Then there came upon the earth a race smaller than giants, bigger than fairies, and this

race of black men fought the fairies till there was not one left; then they fought the giants and drove them down towards the sea. Only two escaped to the stronghold called the Castle of the Devil."

("Oh, la, Aletta," said shocked Louisa, "shocking word!")

"The two last giants took refuge in their fortress, and watched with tired eyes the hordes and hordes of black men coming towards the mountain. The giants took the great rocks and hurled them down the steep slopes, and down the pathways called ravines. But still more and more black men followed those who fell; the giants hurled more rocks, until at last, the whole top of the fortress was gone and they had no more protection and no more big rocks, and the Mountain has been flat ever since. Then, in the darkness of the night, the two wounded tired giants left the mountain: as they reached the flat country on the other side," (Aletta pointed towards Constantia and the Wine country) "one giant fell, with a monstrous arrow through his heart. The other giant buried him under the hill we call the Bosheuvel, and placed seven big rocks on the summit to show that the giant was a chieftain. Then all through the dark hot night the wounded giant tramped across the Isthmus, staining the flowers and grass with his blood; the sandy earth sank under the weight of his heavy feet, his footprints became

the beds of the Vleis where we gather blue lotus. . . ."

Then, like a triumphant Niobe, Mrs. Crawford swept down into the vineyard, followed by Dirk Zorn.

"Leave us, Mama!" screamed the three promising nuns, "we are in heaven!"

"In heaven! Aletta, my dear, your games are slightly over realistic," gasped Mrs. Crawford, gathering armfuls of little garments, and proceeding to wrap an angel with yards of red flannel.

"Ah, Mama, be careful! — my waist!" And then Aletta explained, and Mrs. Crawford threatened bed and backboard, and altogether, pretty soon, every one found that it was earth, and not heaven.

"Most trying, most trying," whispered Mrs. Crawford to Dirk, "most trying to be continually playing the Mother."

Then aloud to Aletta. "My dear, you are missed at the Homestead I fear. Such bustle and work for this wedding. Look at Jane! She has the appearance of a very young green pea at present: what a shade! How, indeed, am I to turn her into a Bridesmaid, all in one night!"

The party separated at the vineyard gates. The Crawford girls went happily to bed on bread and milk. Aletta and Dirk walked up the oak avenue to the Homestead.

CHAPTER X

Of How Even a Fat Man Can Become Romantic, and of How the Governor Pays a Call on the Van Bredas

The Household of Orangezicht was assembled in the regions of the kitchen. Preparations for the wedding turned every day's housekeeping into an orgie of foods.

Decapitated poultry lay in heaps on the kitchen floor; Apollo, a hideous bandy-legged Mozambique, came in through the vine-trellised doorway, his broad shining shoulders loaded with firewood; Cupido, a half-bred Hottentot, staggered under huge round baskets of orange pumpkins and bright green water-melons.

Eva, the chief cook, sat in the chimney corner, surrounded by a high wall of chickens which she picked to the tune of an appropriate Hottentot dirge, so minoresque and mournful that one would have imagined she assisted at the last rites of her own family.

A pretty light-brown Malay girl, Annasina, was pricking piles of green figs and water-melon peel (prior to placing them to soak in lime) for preserve.

Through the carved oak screen was the big dark "Voorhuis" chamber, where the Van Breda neighbors were peeling almonds, cleaning raisins, and working and chattering as though to create the requisite appetite for the day of the feast.

Like a clucking hen, decked in black taffetas, Mijnfrau Van Breda rustled round the high room and in and out of the kitchen, scolding, petting and manœuvering her slaves and her friends, until the plump chatelaine of Leeuwenhof called for coffee and a little gossip.

Orangezicht homestead basked in its own vineyards. Designed some hundred and more years ago by a clever Huguenot designer, the greater sculptor Anton Anreith, on his way to study the East, had remained a fascinated captive at the Cape, repaying the luxurious hospitality of his hosts by molding subtle decorations of fruit, flowers or classical figures on the gables of their homestead, over the small-paned Dutch windows, or as wall decorations in their gardens.

Anton had lived at Orangezicht and left wonderful legacies. A terra-cotta railing with pillars entwined with garlands curtained the slave yard and out-buildings from the back windows of the Voorhuis — a great dining hall running straight through the house — divided into Hall and eating-place by the carved wooden screen of teak. The wide veran-

dah or stoep reflected on its wide red tiles the light and shade given by the roof of Indian oaks which grew close to the house; an avenue of tangerine trees laden with golden fruit led up to the curved brick steps of the teak front door. Anreith's garlands and a figure of Time decorated the doorway gable; the heavy reed thatching, coming low on either side of the gable, framed the beautiful design. The square teak shutters were bolted and hinged in worked silver, the small-paned windows eternally closed to keep out the heated air. Inside, the atmosphere was icy. No carpets spoilt the red tiled floors. Rimpje benches, carved and seated with thongs of hide, stood against the white walls; in one corner a wonderfully good 18th Century bureau made by the Orangezicht slaves, under supervision; two or three copper bowls gleamed from wooden tables and low wood and leather coffers. A discarded sedan chair stood in another corner. Through the screen the long dining table glowed, and some old oil paintings of ancestors stared from the walls. Three Delft dishes holding oranges stood on a dresser. Not a flower! hardly any color but the shine of copper and the yellow fruit. The bedrooms opened into the dining hall, all heavy wooden beds and scrupulous sheets and pillows; fine silver bolts and chaste latches, and ivory inlays in the mirrors and round the edges of tall-boys, were the only

decoration. Some of the gigantic gabled wardrobes were carved and inlaid with ebony; and slender yellow-wood chairs with ball and claw feet and carved rounded backs were suggestive of Europe and of the East. Much of the furniture had been carved by Javanese and Indian prisoners; but none of the brilliant shining lacquer found a home amid this serene cleanliness of polished wood, whitewash, and red tile — an everlasting memorial of the people who inspired it; an undemonstrative deep-thinking, deep-feeling people, arrogant in untempted virtue; polished only with homely manner.

Aletta, in purple muslin, was busy turning the house into a garden, an English fashion that her aunt Petronella found hard to bear. Aletta brought in long branches of blue plumbago and heads of agapanthus and went rapturous over the combination of her flowers and the Delft china hung on the white walls and in rows on the cabinet shelves, Dirk Zorn encouraging and making verses for the occasion; and Dirk had other things in his mind than verses. Mijnfrau Van Breda suffered the flower decorations; but when it came to such a pass that the slaves commenced bringing in pomegranate bushes and trails of vine with great purple bunches still hanging from the stems, she would have bundled the whole business out of the house — but for Dirk Zorn. Dirk approved, and Mijnfrau Van

Breda had begun to regard the Leeuwenhof vineyards as an extension of the Van Breda vineyards: when the proper time should arrive, she, herself, would give Aletta (the slow girl) a good push in that direction, though, " fooi Toch! she was not a girl to push one way or the other!' "

Dirk and Aletta, gathering pink belladonna lilies and tuberoses, were nearer to one another than often arrived in Aletta's scheme of life, and the purple of Aletta's gown showed her round throat startlingly smooth and soft. You would notice Aletta's throat before you took interest in her face.

Dirk's eyes never left Aletta's throat: it hypnotized his gaze to the point of obsession. Not surprising that suddenly, Dirk, having gone pale as a ghost at the peril of the moment, lost hold enough to grasp that staring white throat in his big hands with the amount of strength that he would use to grasp a slender smooth stem of a young birch tree, — and then because Aletta's throat was of flesh and not of wood, the divine sense of strength gave place to some sensual joy as his fingers sank into Aletta's white throat; and as his mouth met her mouth, unresisting enough, there was nothing left in his mind but the overpowering knowledge of sex — and a distant wonderful knowledge that Aletta held herself still and unresisting against him.

Thus a minute passed: the world seemed hung by

slender vibrating chains, the atmosphere seemed emptied of all but the throbbing pulse of life, solider things faded in such blinding light that it had well been darkness.

Then galvanized tense bodies relaxed — and there was an end of the kiss. So two people can usurp the world.

Aletta leant against the trunk of a pine tree: Dirk, panting, saw nothing yet, but heard her slow heavy voice:

"That was very wonderful. I like to be kissed like that; but you are not the man I wish to do it. Your hands are too fat, and I do not like you. I must be kissed by a man who pleases me more."

That she could passively and dispassionately analyze such a moment! — the insult about his hands might be passed over, but the insult to the moment —! No! No! Dirk Zorn threw himself on to the earth, his face hidden in his fat hands.

And so Aletta, for the first time in her life saw a human being stripped of veneer, saw the bare aching soul of Dirk Zorn, saw the tortured, writhing, heavy body — she saw all. The nostrils of her delicate nose quivered, her senses played truant; her mind dragged her back to the original standpoint, and her eyes looked with disgust on the fat twisted hands. . . . She smoothed her hair in the reflection of the little mountain stream that edged

a pathway of hydrangeas, smoothed the crumpled folds of her purple gown, walked across to the hot orchard, picked a peach and came back to Dirk, all sullen now, gazing down the avenue that led to the town, down the avenue, on to the sea.

Then he spoke: she must love him, she had been happy to be kissed by him: he, Dirk, had kissed many women and knew the difference between a woman who desired it and a woman who did not. And so on.

Aletta, nibbling the peach, answered that indeed she had desired it, desired it always, (here stopped to have to push away Dirk's hands as in the old days) but that he must understand there is a mighty difference in the matter of the giving — but yet, better than not have it at all. . . .

Aletta threw away the hard kernel of the peach.

"No use, a hard-pit," [1] she said.

The fat poet smiled.

"How like you, Aletta. You eat it and then find fault with it. You let me kiss you and then. . . ."

"Find fault with you. I cannot help it, Dirk, by my honor, I cannot. I let you kiss me, but I closed my eyes and — and — I imagined it was some one else. Ja! Ja! I know, they wish the vine-

[1] Cling-stone peach.

yards to join. Tante Petronelle only waits to eat Zorn grapes that are also Breda grapes — to hold babies that are yours and mine — fooi! How shamelessly I talk. Should I marry you, Dirk, it would be just like this kiss; I would always close my eyes. I would always try and pretend it was to some one else I was married. I love beautiful things, Dirk, and you are not beautiful." She smiled sweetly at him, and stretched him a slim white hand; as he did not take it but folded his arms across his chest, head sunk, she passed her wonderful hand slowly over his hair; all the while torrents of her words dazed his brain, insult after insult in her clear strong voice; and when he looked up again her eyes were closed and she was still speaking.

He woke to the degradation of it all and pulled her towards him roughly, finding pleasure in hurting her.

"I wondered how long you would bear such things," she whispered, not struggling or resisting his fury. "I like strength — it is fine." She smiled. "Pray remember then that strength pleases me, but I shall pretend all the while that it is some other person. Does the prospect please you?"

"My God! What a girl." Then he relapsed again into prayers and whines. Could she not have

compassion? He loved her so! He grovelled — implored — wept — "How cruel she was — how heartless."

She lost all patience.

"I will kick you if you lie there like some fat howling animal. Why should I be tormented — why? why? why? Why should I love you? I do not. Listen! Believe! I *do not!* I want beauty, romance, mystery, hundreds of things you have not got. What are the Zorn vineyards to me! Now this is finished. I have said all I think, have thought, or will ever think on this subject." She was beautiful! He gazed at her, too fascinated by her face and body to care what the heart and soul of her thought about it all. To him she was the woman to be desired, and to be got; but she had placed an immaterial barrier between them, and unconsciously, for he was too stunned with self pity to reason, he felt that for the moment this chapter of his courtship was over. He had besieged with his three great weapons. His love for her, the Zorn vineyards, and his own great strength. She accepted while explaining that they meant nothing; and the Zorn vineyards she metaphorically flung back in his face.

Here the interview ended, interrupted by the Governor and Georgiana, riding ahead of their Staff, on their way to the Round House, the journey hav-

ing been postponed for some weeks on account of Georgiana's illness and Barry's wound.

Miss Somerset slipped off her horse on to Aletta's neck and gurgled over her friend; the Governor thought the Breda filly was finding the pasturage strong diet, glancing from Zorn's now flushed, sulky face to Aletta's quivering nostrils. The Governor judged a woman almost as well as he judged a horse. Barry came up on the old white pony alone, and Dirk remembered again the strange hurrying through the woods of the day before.

"Where is Captain Cloete" asked Aletta.

"He has ridden on with the servants and wagons," replied Miss Somerset, "and her ladyship and Mr. Keppel are riding by Green Point and the Downs."

No one mentioned the queer little burlesque of a duel that had taken place in the Gardens.

Barry's swagger was more remarkable than ever — to hide possibly the slight lameness — accentuating it to the extent of general remark; and it ended in Barry going red for once and most disagreeably refuting the voluble attentions of Mijnfrau Petronella, who having heard from the Governor, *en camera,* of the affair and the stiffness, produced "bouchu," the healing herb off the Breda farms in the Caledon district. Barry at once became boastful. "So many of these trifles, ma'am —" (One

gathered he had fought with half the British Army.)

Tante Petronelle presented all the clacking neighbors, herded them before Lord Charles and turned them on to Barry, who was in his element refusing their remedies and accepting their smiles, with Georgiana's blue eyes viewing the scene with palpable disfavor.

They drank coffee on the wide verandah overlooking the bay and the narrow Isthmus. Lord Charles was deep in an argument with old Michael as to the defensive positions of the Craig batteries running down the face of the Devil's Peak, and how the English under Sir David Baird had marched knee-deep in sand and slime from the Blueberg Mountains across the Bay, on their march of capitulation.

"That is what David named it; said he never manœuvered a more demned dull business; said he regarded his fighting reputation buried in the mud of the Salt River."

"What he lost in fighting reputation he most assuredly regained in such progress to damnation as to turn his troops blue from one end to the other of their red battalion. He reached heights," yapped Barry, "that you, my dear Excellency, can never achieve! His curses dried up the Salt River, and burnt the veld for miles around."

Barry stood silhouetted against the sky, his thin

arms waving and gesticulating dramatically; and Dirk Zorn again had those disturbing ideas which at the mention of Barry always thrust themselves to the forefront of his mind.

"When the English come," interrupted Mijnfrau Van Breda, "de tulips from Holland did die. Dere have never come flowers again: I takes it as a warning. Derefore, except to the black stuff"—(so Tante Petronelle and all her period thought of their slaves) "I always speaks de Englis'. Mar, fooi toch! de days I maak watermelon konfeit, en van der Hum brandy-vine, I says my praers in Dutch, to bring, mar, ein beitje luck to de brandy-vine. For once I vas stirring de stuff and laying in de naartje oranges, when I say to Aletta, 'My dear Heaven! but dis smell all right'! when dere fell in a whole naartje orange too many; and all die verdomte stuff was spoil itself. Dat's wot come of maaking Van der Hum in de Englis' language. Now, from dat day I maak de Van der Hum in Hollandse."

"I understand quite a number of Cape people still say their prayers in Dutch — and curse in English," said Barry.

Mr. Whitefoote, deep in the consuming of a very liquid sweet-melon, went through a peculiar species of spasm which Miss Somerset called, in her own familiar language, a "conniption"; Mijnfrau

turned upon him three infuriated crimson chins and two shocked eyes, and as though to refute the attack, exclaimed: "Allemachtig!"

Then they brought out the great mahogany wedding coffer, and spread pillow-slips and home-grown-goose quilts and such like over the verandah tiles, which started Lord Charles on a tale of how he had slept for the first time in his life in cambric sheets at Wynyard and disliked the chillsomeness, and how, though my lady was all mug to him, yet the Brussels lace with which the pillows were trimmed tickled him all night — he advised the buxom fiancée to rip off the damnable stuff if she wanted to have a pleasant wedding night — how he had given his own filly the hint, though Wyndham [1] was a casual fellow, and grown up to the custom of lace frills round his ears!

Aletta and Miss Somerset looked by this time like excited Lorelei in a sea of tarlatans and muslins and foamy laces; the big coffers like half submerged islands rose above the mélée. Aletta, from under a shining crown of silver leaves, chattered to the half of the audience not in Lord Charles' group.

"The maids of honor are to wear pink tarlatan, my love, and silver leaf crowns."

"Not poor Jane Crawford! Under a silver wreath," giggled Georgiana.

[1] One of the Governor's daughters had married a Wyndham.

Barry added varnish to the picture.

"I would we had to bet upon which would shine the brightest: Miss Jane's complexion or the wreath."

"Nasty wretch!" Georgiana only allowed her own tongue liberties with her friends.

"Now, my fair damsel with the twisted nose —"

Had big Josias been present there would have been an end of this surgeon.

"Dr. James," said Aletta, "Georgiana begs to state that your own defies discussion, so we shall continue with weddings. Maria wishes to dispense with chariots and tilburries and any vehicles, and use the old sedan chair; to be like her own mother and be jostled down the steep 'Gardens' by the slaves. No one to look at Cousin Maria would accuse her of having an uncommon notion, would they?"

As Maria was plump and small and a most comfortable looking bride, no one did much more than mumble contradictions.

"And your turn, m'dear?" Lord Charles crossed the stoep and took Aletta's hand —"and they tell me — they tell me ——" (looking at Dirk Zorn).

"Lies, sir," said Aletta.

"And all the romances ——?"

"Romances, sir?"

"They tell me you write plays for the Dutch

Theater and that Dirk Zorn reels off poetry like an adept."

"That is why I wish to make a real romance and call it 'The Heiress.' All romances end when the Lovers meet. Is that not so, sir? To be a rich heiress is romantic, but to be a rich wife might be a monstrous calamity."

"Very right, Miss," chipped in Barry. "Romances paint at full length people's wooings, and give but a bust of marriages."

The conversation was going too far the wrong way for Mijnfrau Petronelle's liking: even Michael sought to interfere.

"Mij lieve, klein doctortje, leave then alone what you may know little about."

"Ja," said Petronelle —"as if then we did not have very much boders with Aletta. Three times she vas failed for die confirmings by die Minister of the Kirk. Die last time, mij Machtig! die Minister ask one last question: 'How old vas Jacob ven Isaac was born?' He stand at die torp of die class — dis eldest girl von Mijnfrau Zorn — she could not say die answer; die Minister go all through die class till he come to Aletta, and Aletta she answer die most principal question, so she pass and vas confirm. Mar, mij lieve, I vas very afraid I vould git no confirmings party vor Aletta as long as I lif."

The lady was wound up for all her troubles when the dear neighbors hit upon the lucky moment for departing.

The Governor, too, wished to be high up the path leading through the vineyards and coffee plantations to the gap in the mountains called "The Kloof," and from there, far above the town, to see the sun sink into the Indian Ocean. Aletta and Dirk Zorn rode with the party. As they passed through the woods that screened the white homestead with the high walls, and reached the spot where he had seen Barry pushing his way through the undergrowth and shrubs, Dirk Zorn riding by Aletta's side, told her, as a man tells to the woman he loves, the story of Barry and the old white house.

"A mystery, I fancy, Aletta. I would give half Leeuwenhof to know the true history of little Currey." Then he told her the story of the duel; how the Governor had himself carried the little doctor across the Gardens to Government House and bandaged the scratch and allowed no one near; and he went on to tell Aletta how he knew of a man who suspected many strange things between the Governor and little Currey, and how a lampoon had been written to be placarded up on the morrow, and how more would certainly follow: and much more this foolish young man confided to Aletta, becoming

more indiscreet the deeper the sun sank, red and glowing, into the golden sea.

There would be very little history, very few memoirs would ever have been written, no love-letters published, many scandals averted, many beautiful and unbeautiful things never remembered, if men did not with few exceptions, shuffle off their burdens at the feet of the women they love. Some, like stubborn pack mules, too tired to protest, too weary to deny, stand patiently loaded, to wait the tactful tender hands that shall free them, or the keen wit that shall guess the contents of the burden and the need of rest. Others, with the giant ungrace of the camel, floundering with bended knees, jerk off their cargo unheeding of the worth, value, or weight. The sun has set, the day's labor is ended: the trouble is, that the journey must be continued next day.

So Dirk Zorn told Aletta a great many things he should have carried quietly, if shamefully, to the end of the journey.

The moon rose through the fir woods, in exquisite imitation of the departed sun — a wraith sun.

Aletta and Dirk were silent, he gazing at her face paled by the sudden moonlight, she, all wondering and troubled and breathless with sudden half-understood knowledge: their horses, with loose bridles, shuffled side by side through the thick carpet of fir needles, snorting now and then with surprise when

some wild cat slunk into the bracken and protea bush, leaving a trail of quivering leaves; or a partridge flurried and fluttered up from beneath their feet; a wood pigeon cooed from her green cover.

CHAPTER XI

On Public Opinion

Placaarden!

"I was never blackballed at a Bilbury Meeting, nor held a position and a disgrace among the Legs of Newmarket. I never juggled mortal man in a bargain, or fleeced the extravagant and unwary. I never was addicted to horse racing or cock-fighting, or slurred or cogged a dice; nor ever did I pander to my lusts or my cupidity, through the medium of public spoliation or sneaking private delinquency."

Three of these placards hung in the Heerengracht.

"Allemachtig!" murmured the inhabitants of Kaapstaad.

"Great Heaven!" muttered the inhabitants of Cape Town.

Neither cry seemed a protest.

With all the haste and satisfaction of the bourgeois who fear to fling filth themselves, they gathered round the placards, in unvoiced applause of the brave canaille who dared voice the worst scandals that they whispered among themselves.

Some miles away from the gossiping, chattering

townspeople, a special orderly had arrived in the early dawn at the Round House, with a copy of this placard and a hurried letter from Colonel Bird.

The Governor came out on to the curved high verandah of his shooting box. Below, the shining blue Indian Ocean swirled and eddied its waters into circles and lines of foam. From the high semi-circular stoep, shaded with sweet scented purple syringa, low clipped hedges of myrtle bordered the terraces down to the edge of the cliffs. A dark line of flaming crimson and gold marked the flowering aloe hedge, which lined the white sands. The rugged Mountain barrier, in great divided battlements, the " Castle " mountains, guarding the coast to the north and south, seemed unsolid dancing giants in the heat haze: " The Twelve Apostles," quoted Sir Rufane Donkin, rounding the stormy coast one bright day from Port Elizabeth, seeking sanctuary in Cape Town after the squabbles of the new Eastern Provinces, held in trust while Lord Charles married a daughter to a Wyndham and took to himself a wife — which affairs meant leave of absence. So the rugged peaks remained " The Twelve Apostles."

It was not yet eight o'clock.

Josias Cloete, in a fluttering garment, ran up from the bay below, still dripping and flushed from his early bath.

His Excellency met him.

"They have sent up a special courier, Josias, with a damnable piece of impudence, as a welcome to the Commissioners who have arrived. Mr. Bigge is riding up here now. Look at this."

The Governor handed Cloete the Placard that had greeted the lazy eyes of the Cape Town inhabitants that morning. Josias went redder, and cursed in Dutch, which was a sure sign that it came from the heart.

At that moment Georgiana and Mr. Keppel appeared, followed by Barry. Georgiana saw that something was amiss: Barry joined the Governor and went off towards the stables.

At breakfast the Governor discussed the precipitated arrival of the Commissioners and laughed as he threw into Georgiana's lap the hurried note from Colonel Bird announcing the fact.

"Georgie, me love," he leant across the table, and spoke low to her alone, "here's your affair! Something Bigger — certainly more distinctly Bigger than our little surgeon — John Bigge, principal Commissioner! So smile on him, me lady, and have your little revenge, and see to it that Josias there does not put a stake in his heart."

"Or that our gallant surgeon does not split him up in a duel," said Mr. Keppel, who had overheard

the conversation and had a very one-sided account of the duel affair, confided to him by Barry.

" It means, though, that our retreat here is of very short duration; the moment Bigge arrives we leave for the town." The Governor looked across to his wife, " And you, m'lady, do you stop on with the horses or come down again to the hot town? '

Lady Charles laughed.

" It becomes a fond husband to think of his wife's health: the *hot town,* my dear, will have to sweat and pant without me. I have hired six feet of the coldest water in the world — among the rocks below us — and I shall send you a courier, my dear, twice a day, down to the hot town, with the exact chart of the temperature of that pool. Some of the ponies of course will stay behind."

" Georgiana, do you go? "

" I fear it is imperative," replied Miss Somerset. " Dr. James, will you accompany us? "

Georgiana, with a deep frown puckering all the softness of her forehead, re-read a letter that a tall Van Breda slave had carried up to the Round House in the early dawn.

Aletta had, it appeared, not slept that night, so tormented was she by the overburdening secrets confided by Dirk.

The fact seemed clear — there were to be more

placards with grosser insults — that even Dirk had quailed and refused collaboration — the slave was the person who posted them up — how awful it all was. She had no hold over Dirk: he swearing " she had driven him mad — that he loathed all the English "—(" Most especially, I fancy " added Aletta in a postscript, " Captain Cadogan.")

Georgiana, after reading this, had a short interview with Barry, whispered with an air of importance, in which interview Barry undertook some arrangements not included in Lord Charles' orders for the day; then she climbed up the Lion's Head hill behind the Round House, reached, breathless, a little grove of Silver trees hedged round by purple flowering shrubs, flung herself on the crisp silver leaves — and thought.

At reading the Placard hurriedly, having seized it from Josias' hand, she had failed to value the foul insinuations or to feel the depth of the insult. Lady Charles, she knew, held herself aloof from all wranglings — governmental or otherwise, finding a discursive form of loving, which materialized into a vague kiss or a vaguer pat sufficient to keep harmony between herself and her husband, she had merely shrugged her shoulders and sniffed when reading the Anonymous Epistle over Georgiana's shoulder, and then had blown a dainty and ethereal kiss across the verandah to Lord Charles — with

" My Poor Love "— as an extra sop. Georgiana, turning for breath, during her rushing climb up the hill, had seen her slim white-garbed figure wending towards the sea through the yellow protea and purple flowers of the sea slopes, followed by two women slaves, carrying on their red turbans her ladyship's bathing dress and towels.

" Her ladysip veery fond of herself," the old slave Rachael had remarked one day to herself, but loud enough for Georgiana to hear. Rachael had been the first Lady Charles' tire-woman, taking sole charge of her dressing room and wardrobe. At the advent of the French maid Adeline with her new ladyship, Rachael, who hailed from St. Helena and prided herself on having less black blood than the other slave women possessed — fallen from her high estate to something less distinctive — *under* Adeline, mumbled loudly, while accepting her sad lot.

All dark races have that aptitude of the caricaturist enabling them to hit to a nicety, by some aptly chosen definition, the peculiarity or particular attribute of the persons over them. It is as if the subconscious recognized inferiority has found its revenge . . . for even when the Superior has found favor in their eyes, the nickname is almost always spiteful: therefore was their new Ladyship, " She who loves herself " to every slave in the capital . . . " My Ladysip "— in their best English.

Slowly, through Miss Somerset's brain, the poison of the Placard worked its way; only some of its vileness was remembered. "Sneaking private delinquency!" The last sentence made her hold her breath in horror and her little face flushed, then paled, and flushed again.

"Loathsome people . . . how dared they? . . . "juggled mortal man in a bargain" . . . prompted her memory: and she repeated it slowly over to herself, as if failing through utter horror to grasp its meaning . . . "blackballed! . . . pander" . . . prompted memory.

"Dear Heavens!" gasped Georgiana, "the Pigs!" She was not certain she fully understood the whole import of the libel, but no doubt Aletta who always knew so much more than she did would enlighten her. Aletta was Dutch, and somehow Dutch girls seemed to be very wise. Georgiana was shocked at times at the unlimited knowledge betrayed by Aletta, and sometimes found herself wishing to forget her newly acquired wisdom. So overpowered was she by the fact that there were yet depths she could not fathom.

There were days full of ridings and picnics and excursions, days of laughter and sunshine passed on Flats or Mountain: and during the days — one forgot. But then there were nights. And it was during the nights that remembrance came: the hot still

nights when one sheet as a covering seemed an unbearable weight upon her slim, hot little body: nights when the cicada sang and hummed unweariedly among the gum trees outside her window, and the small green frogs in the water beyond the white garden wall croaked in chorus: nights when she tossed and turned, tired yet sleepless, the pillows growing hot beneath her restless head, turned and turned again with eyes half closed in weariness; and always the relentless memory wide awake and remindful: then great unrest would seize her: limbs refused to remain extended, and brushing aside the entangling mosquito curtain with hot hands she would feel the cool hard floor under her naked feet and grope her way to the moonlit world outside the window: her body pressed against the cool plaster wall, arms wide apart and the warm breeze, heavy with sea moisture from the dark bay, playing round the frills of her nightdress: as in Nature flowers unfold in graceful strength new petals during the night and are ready to greet the sun, fresh with the dews of night yet upon them, so after one of these " awaking " nights and hours passed at the windows, facing the half-opened wonders and facts of her sex and her world, at the first pale glow of dawn, suddenly, as if enchanted, the hot, heavy-smelling sea air became a sharp chilling invigorating breeze, cooling the fever of the night; and very soon she would summon her

maid, and buttoned into her long blue riding habit would canter down, more often alone than attended, to the white sands of the Bay — and would reach it before the sun too. But here among the dry silver leaves, crackling with her slightest movement, to be obliged to face these night ghosts, and to know that evil things were thought by day and saw the sun, and, indeed, were written, was too overcoming to be supported. It was hot . . . people were horrid . . . how steep the hill had been . . . unbearable . . . and yet the others did not appear to mind much . . . stupid: then she relapsed into French . . . " c'était epouvantable!

chose degoutante!
— abominable! "

all the most unladylike, schoolroom-forbidden evidences of disgust. Exhausting these, she fell to weeping: she stretched her poor little self among the crisp leaves and wept little salt lakes among them.

When she had cried for half an hour, she untied an embroidered reticule she had taken from her room when leaving the house: from a small silver flagon she moistened her handkerchief and dabbed it over the little red nose and on to her redder eyelids; presently from an enamel box she took some ointment, and with the aid of a minute looking glass, proceeded to salve her features. Then she opened

a small watch and looked at the hour. Still some time before the Governor and his party were to leave for the town. Replacing everything in the bead-embroidered reticule, she crossed her hands and looked towards the sea. "As Mijnheer says, one must a 'plan make,'" and "one does what one can," she sighed. "I feel a hundred times better. Indeed all this should be no surprise to me. First we had the scandal of the horse and the slave-girl — damn these Dutchmen! It appears every one of them has six or more freed slave-girls. Charles Henry is no saint, I fear, in spite of her new ladyship: certainly she should suffer the hot town and go with him and do the honors to these interfering Birdites. I can imagine the unprejudiced attitude of the Commission, when Bird, Pringle and Company have seen them for two hours."

Feeling again the need of tears, mindful of the perfection of the pomading and the scarcity of elder-flower water in this land, she started off again higher up the mountain, helping herself by the old corroded chains that hung round the rocks — souvenirs of the days only just passed, when the watchman of the oceans would signal by a fire lighted on the summit the arrival of the mail or other vessels: and also as a warning to the rounders of the Cape of Storms. Arrived at the top, the wonderful panorama of oceans lay before her. Immediately to her left was

the big white cross of the Portuguese, scarred into the rock, branding the Cape; before this sign the hordes of Hottentots and Bushmen retreated beyond the barrier mountains of Africa. Further below, the surf fringed the downs of Green Point; a whale spouted playfully between the mainland and Robben Island, the small rock island of rabbits that lay at the entrance to the Bay, used as a whale fishery. She could see the English ship that had brought the Commissioners, her half furled sails still fluttering in the breeze; flying many flags too, and surrounded by innumerable busy rowing boats. She wondered whether some day the wonderful blue bay would be filled with those curious steam boats she had heard of. (She saw the *Liverpool,* first steamship to make a voyage to the Cape — that was more than a year later.)

There was no shade from the scorching sun: she crept into the shadow of a huge boulder where sweet-smelling wild jasmine and red crassula grew from the crevices of the rocks; a lazy snake wriggled into the tangled low bushes. She glanced again at her watch. "Ah, now they have left," she murmured, "and if I am not mistaken in Dr. James' capacity, Mr. Commissioner John Bigge is left behind, and I will accompany him into the Lion's Den" (so she called the witnesses for this Royal Commission).

So Georgiana Somerset had made a "plan."

Things went better for her than she dared anticipate. As she climbed slowly and thoughtfully, down the steep mountain side, she heard the queer rustle of bushes that are parted quietly Georgiana heard the repeated sound many times and then she stopped, took out from the reticule a small packet, which she held half open in her hand — Barry had given her this idea when he first came to the Cape and Georgiana never rode or walked about the mountains alone without this small packet of red pepper: not that there was much danger; runaway slaves certainly escaped to the caves on Table Mountain or on to the seashore among the rocks, but they preferred starvation to the risk of attacking for robbery. But once Georgiana had found a cave, low and white, on the mountain near Hout Bay; she had crawled in on her hands and knees, and a furry soft body had slunk past her into the light, and then, as she lay petrified, with all her blood in her veins congealed, another slim creature had poked its head through the opening of the cave; it sniffed and nosed round. She saw the bright eyes of the wild cat or Cape-tiger — a species of lynx. When she could move she crept into the light. She noticed the trail of the animal among the crushed wild geranium bushes whose fragrance scented the air.

Now, the terror of that experience rushed back to her; she scrambled on to a mass of granite and

looked around; then seeing nothing, passed into a narrow avenue of oak trees, when from the low firs came a muffled cry, followed by others — piteous sounds. Georgiana's heart ceased to thump into her ribs; she recognized those familiar sounds; but she foresaw a dramatic coup, in which her terror could be made a fascinating background. She fled along the avenue, saw a tall man coming towards her, gave one yell and flung herself into his arms. Only to spring out of them: heaven knows they made no effort to detain her! John Thomas Bigge had scarcely anticipated this assault. He looked at Miss Somerset and offered his handkerchief.

"Oh, Sir," sobbed Georgiana, "I am terrified. Oh! would you very much object to . . ." she glanced up at the stern pale face of John Bigge and changed her mind.

"Indeed, Madame," stammered Bigge, "I should be. . . ." He could not guess, poor idiot, that he had better take her in his arms and dry her eyes and imagine the end of the story.

Georgiana dried her own eyes and held out a very stately conventional hand.

"I am Georgiana Somerset, and you must be the Commissioner! I am afraid they have been beating a slave somewhere in the bushes: it frightened me. Shall we go down to the house?"

Bigge gave her his arm, and she chattered to him,

leaving him one or two opportunities to explain how he had ridden up to find the Governor had set off for the town. ("Oh, and left me behind?" from Georgiana, not at all surprised) — that, as Miss Somerset was not to be found, he had begged to remain behind with Mr. Penderby and Dr. Barry to accompany her to Government House. Arrived on the round verandah, Miss Somerset glanced her thanks at Barry.

In three minutes, in her long blue habit she was ready to start. The opportunity for half an hour or more alone with the First Commissioner seemed heaven assisted. She rode with him in front of the two men, and Bigge heard from her lips the queer state of the dissatisfied Colony.

"They have given a Herculean task to poor Charles Henry, Sir: they cannot understand that it is a British Colony. If anything is done for the Dutch, bribery they say; if these things are done for the English, maltreatment, and prejudice, is their cry. They are lazy people, Sir, with no sense of responsibility. Lady Anne Barnard started the conciliation idea — the women came to her parties and the men laughed — that is what happens all the while. Sir Rufane, the Acting Governor, waxed sentimental over any one with a Dutch name, but it doesn't improve matters on the Border; it did not make the Graff Reinet —."

"What is that?" said the Commissioner.

("Oh, heaven!" groaned Miss Somerset.)

Then she proceeded to tell John Bigge a few things about Africa and the policy of Lord Charles that would have come as a new history to the Colonial Secretary — possibly a somewhat prejudiced view of Lord Charles' difficulties; but she sorted Pringle the negrophilist, Fairbairn with his free press ("A most dangerous monopoly when all public opinion is based on lies," murmured Georgiana): the aggressive Bishop Burnett and his discontented Settlers; Edwards the convict; she ticketed them all as dangerous witnesses, whimpered their epitaphs as asides addressed to herself; then started with the troubles of the Dutch malcontents. "His Excellency to meet the demands of the English, advised English in Court and officially — after all we are an English Colony: now the Dutch are grumbling; their precious and most monstrous language is relegated; but the strange part is that even the greatest enemies speak a Taal — that is, their amazing language composed of Dutch, German, Portuguese and English — to their slaves, and bad English among themselves."

When she gave him a chance, Bigge lumbered into the conversation, not too startled by her intelligence to forget to observe her nose and her dancing blue eyes.

"But I imagine the Dutch are really pioneers, and pioneers unless they marry will never make citizens."

"Ah, yes, they are fighters from that strongest of incentives, discontent and intolerance and protection. But they have no initiative. They carry guns and bibles, but their horizon never widens; they get no work from the conquered nigger; they press into the wilds and take their families, to grow enough food — and there it may end. They loathe interference, which is their name for Progress. If they cannot swallow up the invading nationality, as they did the Huguenots, they become intolerant of progress and new settlers."

Then, this Georgiana worked a miracle. She subtly brought Bird, the Colonial Secretary, into the mass of information she poured into Bigge's fascinated ears: that he, Bird, had objected to the Governor being represented at the Commission's sittings: how obviously unjust it would be, etc., etc.

"But," said John Bigge, "the Inspector of Government lands makes up our number."

"You will find, Sir, Mr. d'Escarey a most prejudiced person: and it appears the chief accused is to have no advocate: that, Sir, is not justice. His Excellency will be asked to sign his own indictments without having an occasion to refute them. Ah, Sir, you will see only too clearly the mass of inven-

tions and scandals that any gentleman, who is not a low-class Scotch settler or a Dutchman, is open to. Indeed, indeed, Sir, it fills me with a great desire to weep, Sir." (Georgiana's eyes filled with tears.)

There was silence. Broken by tiny sniffs from Georgiana; John Bigge, feeling uncomfortable, paid great attention to the landscape.

". . . A desire to weep . . . if I but had my handkerchief —" murmured Georgiana.

More sniffs. (" Heavens, what a dolt! " thought Miss Somerset.)

Then she turned on him, drew her horse up short, tears racing down her cheeks.

" Ah, Sir, will you be agreeable enough to loan me yours? "

"Yes, yes, indeed," stuttered Bigge, viewing action with such relief that Georgiana nearly tittered.

Barry, from a safe distance behind, took in the situation at a glance.

" Ca y est! " he said.

" What did you say, Sir? " Penderby asked.

" Nothing! Nothing! . . . Merely a small tribute to the success of the Commission."

CHAPTER XII

Mosquitoes and Crescendoes in and Out of Government House

Several things had happened to the satisfaction of Lord Charles. In the place of Mr. d'Escarey, the Land Settlement Commissioner, sat his own aide-de-camp, the pale Whitefoote, who no doubt reported minute details that might be omitted in the written report — (Georgiana had held herself responsible for this and for other manœuvres).

Lord Bathurst in England, having satisfied his conscience that the Government was paying two Commissioners large salaries to deal out justice or to lend sympathetic ears to those Colonists who bombarded the office of the Secretary of State for Colonies with literature on the corrupt state of the Cape Colony, forgot to remark upon the length of time the Commission was to take: it ultimately went into years — a thing much commented upon later.

During this time the wooing of Commissioner John Bigge took place, strangely encouraged by Lord Charles, regarded by Georgiana as inevitable and the only possible reward: though she sometimes wondered if the reward was not impossible.

The Governor entertained the Commission of Enquiry at Government House with dances and dinners.

Georgiana went up to her room at eleven o'clock, and found Aletta curled up asleep in the big cretonne covered chair, her long riding habit soaked, trailing and twisting about her.

She woke as Georgiana closed the door.

"Oh, Georgiana —" and she began to cry. "I'm so tired," she gasped between her sobs, "and I've heard and seen such things."

"I was riding along by the Salt River mouth. My horse put his off leg in a quicksand — Oh, Georgie! — we sank, and sank, and I screamed, and no one came. I was so afraid to die like that, all alone in the wind and water." She shivered.

Georgiana began undoing her wet habit, and rang the bell.

Her own English maid answered it.

"Tell the hall porter to send up an orderly at once to Orangezicht to say that Miss Aletta is staying here to-night."

This gave time for the recovery of Aletta.

"And so, dear," said Miss Somerset.

"Then poor Vos made a big effort, and struggled, and half rolled along the sand, and I caught at a clump of sand bushes on a dune, and held on, and pulled myself out of the saddle up to the little dune.

There I sat until it grew so dark that I was frightened, and crawled down the other side of the dune. There I saw a light in what looked like a boat-house. But it wasn't, Georgiana, it wasn't. I looked through the keyhole, and there was a slave woman and a man talking, and I listened. The man was writing — terrible things — for he kept telling the woman as he wrote: things I do not exactly understand. Dirk came into the room, and seemed to quarrel with the other two; but Georgiana, this one thing I know, they are going to hang up Plaacarten in the Heerengracht to-night — and — and — those awful things are to be written on them. But swear, Georgie, swear that you will say nothing of all this. But we must do something; Oh, Georgie!" . . .

Georgiana stood quite still, looking beyond Aletta, beyond her, beyond the walls of the room, with all her heart, all her instincts, all her mind, tense, as though prepared for some shock, of a nature she subconsciously decided that would include her in its intent.

"I fancy I would prefer not to know the exact meaning of what you have been saying Aletta; but, tell me, does it — do they — mean harm to Papa — and — and others. Tell me, Aletta, my love." And she slid all crumpled and trembling in a little heap of expectancy at Aletta's side, masses of blue tarlatan frills, her little head against the damp rid-

ing habit, her long thin white arms and hands picking nervously at the little bunches and loops of cherry-colored ribbons which decorated her dress. "And you have all the Adventures. You always appear to know so much more than others."

Aletta shook her hands impatiently from her riding dress.

"Have I not told you sufficient, Georgie? The letter I sent you at the Round House! — Allemachtig! Maar Georgie, I myself begin to think there are mysteries you and I will never discover. I begin to *suspect* even things that Dirk has hinted. Now give me a dry gown and I will tell you more of that conversation, overheard while the water and wind kept me company on the Salt River marshes."

The great hall clock in the lobby at Government House sounded two o'clock. The door on to the stair gallery opened with all the preliminary grunts and groans of a heavy Dutch door, trying to be more subtle than goes with its character.

When it had creaked enough to disturb all the slumbering household, Miss Somerset popped her head, and then her slim little body, through the gap.

The night lamps from the hall below shed faint light up the narrow oak stairs. Down these stairs crept Miss Somerset. She turned into a long passage which led to the rooms occupied by the suite,

and tapped when she came to No. 8, marked "Surgeon-Major Barry," and softly turned the handle. Hopeless! The door groaned and creaked. Determined to accomplish her task, she unbolted and opened a side door leading into the far end of the Stal Plein, stepped out into the moonlight night, slunk along the wall for fear of the sentry, and slipped into the open window of Barry's room — always open. The moonlight, almost the brightest and clearest in the world, flooded the room, and she drew the heavy cretonne curtains for fear of being seen. Through the middle — where their folds did not entirely meet — a great ray fell across Barry's bed. As Georgiana pulled the curtains to, Barry sat up. "Psyche — that you?"

Georgiana's heart stopped beating; she had forgotten the fat spaniel. A mass seemed to roll across the floor towards the bed, and amid puffs and snorts dragged itself on to the low English bed (Barry insisted upon having his own small camp bed wherever he slept); "None of the Dutch wooden beds, full of worms — yes, worms, my Love! — we become their little repast soon enough too, malgré nous: so let us keep clear of 'em as long as we have anything to say."

Psyche safely installed amid Barry's blankets, Miss Somerset moved out from the folds of the curtains, and groped towards the chair, where a pile

of clothes lay in a shapeless heap. She collected the uniform, and boots, and light military coat; "Barry's clothes! — Barry's room! — No, none of the linen clothes seen once before! — and Barry there on the little bed!" These thoughts, under other conditions, would have affected her more; now the excitement of her intended action required the concentration of every faculty. It was utterly necessary, she and Aletta had come to this conclusion, that if the thing had to be stopped, some one, and not a woman, must do it.

The amazing thing of this adventure is, that it seemed to be proving the rules of exceptions; for when affairs like this are done in quick, almost subconscious fashion, with all the risks taken and not much thought of, they generally are successful; with that queer quality called luck; as a fairy godmother, or a presiding spirit. But just this night happened to be a nuit blanche for one of the Commissioners; (not Bigge — he was to hear of it later), and this sleepless man happened to be spending the time hanging out of one of the big windows of the upper story, at the other end of the long, flat building. So when Georgiana, with a bundle under arm, stepped through Barry's window into the white moonlight, crept along the side of the house, half the body in shadow, half exposed to the searching brightness,

this sleepless Commissioner watched her; watched her slip through the side door — and drew his own conclusions, which, as he was an ordinary English gentleman of forty something, and a trusted adviser to the Government, were conventional conclusions, having no subtleties, and making no allowances for those peculiarities of events that make every man's case an exception, to prove the fallacy of even imagining there could be a rule. "There is no lie in the world like the truth," said someone; far too obnoxious a truth in itself to be unanimously adopted. Also, sleepless nights are not the special moments of life to make allowances for midnight adventures, and of the various reasons that drove Miss Somerset to run these risks.

The Commissioner withdrew rapidly into his room, and thought what a damn pity it was that the exigencies of life bred this taste for Adventure; and moreover, he remembered one or two little episodes wherein were no extenuating circumstances, but just "damn good life and spirits," and then he lit the tall Dutch candle because he saw too many things in the darkness, things that might interfere with the work of a Government Commissioner. . . . He came back to his original "moutons." So "She"— the little Thing with the enquiring nose — was not anything less than a naughty young Miss; and old John Bigge! gosh! Poor John! — he was

going to make a peculiar fool of himself — for this little baggage too!! No, that was too much: this honest John! Ah, no! It was the Surgeon and the Daughter then. This painted a different complexion on one side of the case . . . perhaps less cause for amazement . . . though God knew what a young thing like that saw in the little coxcomb. But poor honest John! . . . and Mr. Commissioner became so agitated that he hopped out of bed once more, and buzzed about the room like a furious mosquito, all in his friendly concern and interest for Mr. Commissioner John Bigge, who, God knows, should have known better than to drag a Special Commission into entanglements: it was like trying to domesticate a Phœnix that ought to die when its hour arrives: and here was John forsaking the Phœnix duties for tender passages and prejudiced interviews with the entire Somerset family: — there were enough yappings too, over the continual presence of this Surgeon in the Governor's society — (here Mr. Mosquito Commissioner poured out a glass of water and washed down the nasty taste: then continued walking). "But here was his daughter popping out of Barry's bedroom at — what time?" (He caught the tall candle and peered into the face of the clock) "Yes! half past two o'clock!" (Here he singed his hair, which grew with all its concentrated energies on the limited space

of one inch of head, immediately over the left temple; if possible, he would have placed some kind of enclosure around this precious preserve, for he prized it above rubies, it being all the hair there was — and then — Jehosophat! Damme! to have it destroyed all because he was in a state over an elderly man, who was making himself a puppet and a fool, and a gouty fool at that: the game was not worth the candle, much less worth this further sacrifice of hair.)

Ah, ye unfortunates! who, with eyes that fain would deceive themselves, have watched each month the dwindling efforts of the few remaining sprays of thinning hair: ye who have endeavored to remember that there are other things in the world than a fine head of hair. "Were it not better to be bald, scant of hair, than to be near that class of artist whose locks fall in cascades of slovenliness over his art"; such thoughts of consolation: but meantime, let us cling to the remaining few, brushed with care, each sorted and separated over the glossy surface. Ah! it does not make such a bad show! and we remember that men of little hair have had successes, yes, we have known (thank heaven!) younger men than ourselves with less: and it is manners that maketh man, and not hair — certainly not hair. But groom on, brush on, massage night and morning, oil, pomade, and rejoice, rejoice over the

resurrection of each frail departing hair. They that are easier to count than the sands upon the seashore. Oh! how very human! How one rejoices to find these little traits that are so carefully hidden by the linked armor worn by tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor and Special Commissioner; may Time deal gently with your shadows — and your hair, Gentlemen!

Georgiana, by this time busily buttoning herself unfamiliarly into Barry's uniform, helped by Aletta, in a very few minutes was out alone, on her way to the garden gate which led into the "Avenue." From there, she walked along the banks of the canal, which continued the length of the Heerengracht Street (so soon to change its name to the less familiar one of Adderly). The town slept. She passed no one on her walk, and even if she had, she would not have noticed, her mind was so intensely occupied with this Thing she was to do: to save the honor of the Somersets, and the honor of the little sleeping surgeon.

Arrived at the corner of the New Exchange, the "Placaarden," pasted on the little kiosque that stood outside the chain enclosure, caught her eye. The moonlight in Africa dispenses with need of artificial light, and the moon poured down upon this vile libel; and even in her cold rays Miss Somerset's face flushed crimson as she read; flushed and paled,

and flushed again: "the foulness of it!" As she stood on tiptoe to reach the evil thing, an early morning market cart, on its way to the Greenmarket Square, stopped opposite the Exchange, a voice called out in Dutch, "Hie man, is that you, Davie, is that you?" From the shadow of the Exchange a man appeared; the Davie sought for.

Georgiana prayed that he had not seen her, and crept around the kiosque into the shadow. "Davie" crossed to his friend who drove the cart, and they remained in conversation, making further movement for Georgiana impossible. Her project for the destruction of the Placard must be postponed. Whoever would have imagined that a market cart, with a driver and a Davie, would have planted themselves in the moonlight, at three o'clock in the morning, before the Exchange? For half an hour or more Miss Somerset remained in the shadowed side of the kiosque, suffering agonies of physical and mental discomfort, for Barry's uniform, after all, was made for Barry. But as the farmer and his friend showed no signs of leaving their position, Georgiana, fearing further market carts, slipped away behind the kiosque into Grave Street, and on to the Parade, from there to the seashore, fringing the Castle walls.

She had no intention of leaving that lying placard one minute longer than need be; but overwrought nerves, the strain of the night, the horror of the

shock of seeing written on paper what Aletta had cried over in telling her, proved too much to be reckoned with. Poor little Miss Somerset, cum Barry, walked a little deeper into the warm white sand, and watched with tired blue eyes the sparkling brilliant pathway of the moonlight across the bay: one of those dear, wonderful, satisfying pictures that Nature supplies, while men are making the earth just a little more hideous. Since immemorial Time the moon has made pathways of light across the waters; we have looked at it to-day, and yesterday, and to-morrow again, and we nestle into the great harmonious mood of Nature till sleep comes, ere our eyes grow accustomed to the sight.

The Honorable Georgiana Somerset slept. She woke two hours later with the dawn light on her face, and cold, fresh little waves lapping over Major Barry's boots, took five minutes to collect the various reasons for finding herself on the shore of Table Bay in uniform, jumped up, and walked along the foreshore sea wall until she arrived near the Exchange. Unfortunately a seafaring man named Findley happened to be riding up to the Heerengracht slightly ahead of Georgiana, on an early morning errand into the country. Passing the kiosque, he pulled up his pony, read the Placard, whistled, and trotted off, thinking someone had hit upon a pretty filthy explanation of the Governor's

character; also, he thought, what a pleasant morning greeting it would be to the town that was beginning to toss aside bedclothes and welcome the morning with the yawns of southern people who have slept too long and too heavily. No doubt the imaginings of Skipper Findley would have proved true, but that tired and horrified Georgiana, bravely defying recognition, walked up to the kiosque two minutes later, snatched down the offending paper, and was rushing up Grave Street and across to the little garden door, congratulating herself on having met no soul or any obstacle to stop her this time. Georgiana reckoned rashly, for Findley was not the man to hold his tongue off a spicy bit of gossip, and "Davie" was too good a citizen not to recognize the little Surgeon in the moonlight. So here were two witnesses; damning enough evidence as it proved later.

In the meantime she was up in her own room again, struggling out of the borrowed uniform, Aletta kissing and comforting — to that point of hindrance which seems a trap all nice women fall into from sheer kindness of heart, and a slice of pride too — over the return of a hero, and goodness knows, Georgiana looked a fetching little mannikin. They talked until six o'clock, Georgiana telling of the doings of the night, and gloating over the success of it all, when she suddenly remembered the

uniform, and sent Aletta downstairs to the quarters where the men servants collected the various uniforms and clothes, ready for the brushing and cleaning of the next morning. "They will think Dr. James has left his things there overnight," said Miss Somerset, "and Dr. James will think that Brady has been in to fetch them early: things will go smoothly, I feel sure."

"My love, now you must go to sleep." Aletta having returned from the errand, found Georgiana tucked up in a forlorn looking little heap of humanity, in the low window seat, clad in one garment with the small amount of lace that was considered sufficient trimming for respectable underwear in 1820 days.

Outside, the summer sun flooded the garden; the small, brilliant yellow and pink blossoms of the prickly pear plant opened wide and wider their cup-like petals, rays of sunlight caught and held in the entanglement of the fleshy thorned leaves; low beds of crimson and magenta mesembreanthemum blazed so vividly that they seemed myriads of tiny, gorgeous honeybirds caught in nets, and held to the earth: in the white pond below the window, deep blue lotus lilies were already enticing the bees and butterflies by their scented breath to flutter and flutter, low, over the water.

Aletta leaned out and caught long sprays of hon-

eysuckle and Cape jasmine. "Smell!"— she drew them towards Georgiana —" scents like that make me mad, Georgie. They would drive me to do many things. What is there in us so buried that only such scent makes us forget to fear it; —Oh! I am frightened of myself sometimes; — smell, Georgie!"

Aletta held the flowers to her and as though mesmerized by their scent, began upbraiding herself.

"There are fifty Mes — all me and yet differing: there is a me, Georgie, a me that is cruel, that would hurt if it could; a me, that though it may love, yet finds pleasure in seeing misfortune to the person I love. Do you believe that, Georgie? You know I love you, love you — love you, and yet, hidden away there is a me who would be almost glad to know that someone had said ill of you. Oh! my dear, my dear! One day, one day something will happen — all these selves will be too strong for me: even now I disobey Tante Petronelle, and on occasions I find myself thinking that Oom Michael speaks nonsense. I hate Dirk, yet I like him to love me. There — there — I am like a naked woman now, I have taken off all the coverings from myself. Look at me, Georgie, look: but say you still love me."

Strange girl! She stood tall and straight, the sharp lines of her lithe body swathed in the redness

of Georgiana's dressing gown, outlined sharply against the whiteness of the wall; the white jasmine flowers on their long green trailing stems massed in her arms.

Georgiana seemed to listen to her friend's confession.

"We naturally find ourselves interesting," she said, a little abruptly, as though in answer to an unspoken challenge.

Then she rose impatiently and pushed aside the flowers.

"Quick, Aletta, we will ride: we will ride along the sands, and see the boats come in, without Whitefoote or Penderby." She rang for her maid.

Like flocks of birds, low flying across the blue water, the fishing boats sailed into Table Bay; Georgiana's nostrils distended with the faint whiffs of salt crisp air, the freshness of the morning was not to be wasted on heavily-scented flowers and the dark memories of her sleepless night.

CHAPTER XIII

An Elderly Gentleman Is Forced to Fight a Duel with His Own Conscience

Mr. Commissioner John Bigge bowed, and shut the heavy teak door behind him, leaving Miss Somerset to face the discomforting knowledge of having engaged herself to an elderly English gentleman of good manners and uncompromising appearance, having more than suspicious tendencies to gout and a pronounced *faiblesse* of temper and liver. Miss Somerset was piqued — a reason why many people with gouty tendencies are married. The Commission was taking its slow dignified time over the scandals.

Some months had elapsed since that first meeting, when clever Miss Somerset had flung herself into the arms of the First Commissioner.

The interview had taken place in the long gallery of the Castle, where Georgiana had ridden to take tea in Barry's Quarters — tea in honor of Mr. Bigge — where she had smiled cherubically into the dry serious face of John Bigge, and held her twisted feature higher than any nose had a right to go.

When Barry had left for the hospital at Salt River, she had volunteered to show Bigge the Castle

ramparts; the old Dutch cannon, the tennis-court below, the dungeons, the queer ancient Dutch plan of the Fortress that guarded the tavern of the Seas; the stucco plan designed from the plans of Vauban's fortresses and placed in the dome ceiling of the old Sea entrance: she stood in the dark portico and told him how once the waves of Table Bay sprayed the old Sea door — and suddenly Bigge knew that he was a man; forgotten his liver, and the gout, and the scandal set before the Commission: he saw slim, fair Georgiana, her white soft arm, all angles of youngness, pointing to the old roof, and he gulped; which unromantic performance many better men have resorted to in times of need.

But when they came to the long, low room where Lady Anne Barnard had lived and loved and written romance into her middle-aged life, Georgiana waxed eloquent over this clever woman who had written songs, held her London salon, loved, too well, Prime Minister Melville — for whose sake she married young Barnard and exiled herself at the Cape. From there she wrote fascinating clever, spirituelle letters to Melville, and, added Georgiana, "he had the kindness to tie them up with blue ribbons (perhaps he had a tendresse for the dear thing). How sad a thing when a woman loves! I have it that these letters would cause much scandal were the ribbons untied."

Her face betrayed such feeling that Mr. Bigge gulped in vain, and fell on his knees and declared himself, as Georgiana put it later to Aletta; a prosaic proceeding it seemed. Poor Bigge was all hoarse and stammering, in a state to crush her all to pieces, as it takes men who have passed the perfect age of forty: but he flattered himself he was behaving like a gentleman: he undoubtedly was — which also shows how very little he understood women, and how unnecessarily he taxed himself. And all because a flouting little popinjay behaved like an over-animated stone image, the Honorable Georgiana Somerset gave the Commissioner her slim little hand and promised to be his wife after the Commission had terminated. Strange to say, she meant to keep her word. Several ends were gained; the Governor's position would be vindicated; Barry, she hoped, regretful, and no more coping with her new ladyship. Aletta would marry Dirk, etc., etc.; all the upstart logical reasons that unbalance the scales, and pour gold into the wrong coffer.

John Bigge, when he left Georgiana, started a fearsome walk across the sand dunes with his busy conscience as a companion du voyage. It started to upbraid him the moment he heard big Cloete's sword clatter and rattle over the paved cobbled stone court-yard; it scolded him as he passed the Fort Knocke, where pale Mr. Whitefoote, with an

orderly, rode past on a message from Lord Charles; it cursed him, as he waded through the sandy swamp behind the military hospital, where the little Surgeon waved him a handful of bandages from an open window — among the dunes it jeered at him for a fool — an old fool! Conscience minces no words: it forced him to behold the crisp strong little blue waves, and fear what it was to be young and strong and clean; it made him look towards the Blue Mountains, and know that she would skip like the uncommonly gay little hills of Solomon; that he would have to wait below; it made him remember with stinging politeness every time in his life he had had from women the gift he begged from this girl; it drew for his inspection a vivid little picture of how the news would be told to a lady who had found housekeeping for three people as economical as for two — the large jovial lady who was so much a habit, that it came as a shock to remember she should have to be regarded as a conscientious objection.

Georgiana, alone in Anne Barnard's room, reviewed the situation.

To discover that Aletta's warnings were more fire than smoke had not stunned her as they might have another woman. To her, horror and insult meant action: she had acted, and there remained but the hope that this would end the affair. Then she commenced the train of thought brought into being by

Aletta's second letter. If there was some mystery attached to Barry, and if he guarded some secret behind the walls of the old house on the mountain, what was it to her? now indeed, more than ever, what to her? She would soon marry Bigge, would sail with him away from this Cape of Storms and worries: what was it to her if Penderby, Whitefoote, and Cloete cared! what if they gossiped at Orangezicht. She could hear Tante Petronelle, "My dear Heaven! the old Commissioner!": she saw herself and her action discussed from one end of the Peninsula to the other.

"Let me see," said Georgiana, "did I marry Josias what would they say? 'What! marry a Dutchman! Only one English woman has been brave enough to do that!' Marry Whitefoote! Ugh! dear little pale bunny man! He could not even lift me. Tante Petronelle would say, 'Hie Georgiana! not the witbokje!' Marry Penderby? to have one's self corrected from morning to night, attention drawn to a pretty point of the imagination, careful application of the right this, to the right that — oh no! No! No! Quelle galère! James Barry? Charles says Dr. James has had a terrible sadness in his life which he will never forget. I suppose there are some men who do not forget — until they find the woman who can help them to do so. But I fear Dr. James does not even love fat

Psyche! and then, if those stories which Aletta tells me are true? I cannot begin to see why it happens that Papa so seldom misses an opportunity of placing Doctor James on a species of pedestal."

Meanwhile in the Castle court-yard was hurried commotion. The commotion of law and order unfortunately makes far more disturbance in its initial stages than does the original crime.

Georgiana hurried to the window. A guard of soldiers, around an outraged man, who called heaven and hell to witness to his just indignation. The group hurried clattering and noisy over the cobbled stone court, through the low Dutch arch doorway, through to the inner court-yard.

Georgiana tied on her bonnet and ran down the stairs on to the round steps, which lead to the door of Lady Anne's rooms. There she found Colonel Bell.

"What is it, sir?"

"They have arrested Edwards who has been writing sedition for weeks, and they now suspect him of being author of various placards and letters He was found hiding in a house at Wynberg. The trouble is that he accuses Barry of hanging up the placards himself, at two o'clock last night; and other evidence, from two men who had brought in stuff for the early market, goes to show that Dr. James was seen outside the Exchange at three o'clock this

morning. The placard was only seen by one Findley at half past five o'clock and no one can find out who took it down. The whole town is talking of it; Findley swears he read it; though why one should take the word of one man, I cannot for the life of me understand."

Michael Van Breda came up. "Ah, Miss Georgie, so you keep Aletta by you last night; die Frau vas worry till die message vas come."

Another clatter through the big archway heralded the arrival of the Governor, the Fiscal and Josias Cloete. Lord Charles looked worried.

"Bell, the Press people are worrying me for admittance and detail about the arrest, and I hear from the Fiscal here that the latest idea is that the dem thing was hung up by Barry, to give us an opportunity for arresting Edwards. God — the foulmouthed beasts! — anyhow, now I shall offer a reward to find out something more definite about it." He caught sight of his daughter standing white and still among the little group. "Georgiana, Cloete will see you home. I thought you were with Bigge."

"I was, Sir, but Mr. Bigge has — gone;" she hesitated because the explanation seemed feeble. Her disappointment seemed too great to be borne; that in spite of her risks and her terrors she had not succeeded; that a single wretched creature should have seen this thing — the Lord only knew whether

there would not be found others who had seen it also. Her miserable failure! when, from fatigue and excitement, she had fallen asleep on the sands! Should she tell? It would exonerate Barry, but who in Cape Town would believe her story? She could tell what Aletta had heard in the little house on the shore, it would not matter now — now that she had failed; now that it was all being discussed and given to the public — yes —like Dr. James' bone, that he was always speaking of; the bone flung to the dogs, to be torn and worried and crunched and fought over. Yes, she would tell Charles everything — to-night. These thoughts passed through her mind as the Governor was speaking, and accounted for her reply.

But her plans suffered another shock — from the Governor.

" By the way, Georgie, things are in such a pretty pickle that I have made arrangements and given orders that her Ladyship, and you, with Mrs. Crawford, will leave to-day for Worcester for a few days, till things are settled. Now I must see to many things. Good-by, Georgie dear."

As he stooped to kiss her, she whispered: " Mr. Bigge has something to tell you, Sir; but do not reply until I return — please, Papa — dear Papa! "

There was no time for more.

"A cab would be best, I fancy," said Josias, as they left the Castle. "The streets are full of gossipers." He hailed a broken down cabriolet, its white hood and brilliant red wheels not less gay than the costume of its Malay driver, in green and crimson garments.

The space in the cab seemed very small when long Josias had installed himself; Georgiana appeared tinier than ever.

"How big you are!" she murmured, and then very rapidly began asking multitudinous questions about the queer business of the arrest of Edwards, because of the fear that her first remark had led Josias to appreciate too much the narrowness of the situation; but with as much suddenness as a Dutchman can put into what he has deliberated on for months — Josias kissed her, full on the mouth. Georgiana's spine shrank to one inch of marrow, and her arms seemed possessed of a desire to wind themselves around Josias' neck (she was afraid later that they had) and her lips trembled, and she longed that the kiss should last: the queer strength of Josias' bristly whiskers seemed to sting her into such daringness. It was only because she opened her eyes and realized that her face was very close to a face long familiar with a certain amount of distance between them, that she managed to whisper a half truth to

save further explanations, "I have promised to marry Mr. Bigge and I am afraid you must not kiss me."

"That's me demmed bad luck," said Josias. And he kissed her again. So different to Mr. Bigge's kisses!

Then it was she knew she did not care for either of them. Josias led her weeping from the cab to her rooms, where she found her maid had received orders to pack her trunks.

CHAPTER XIV

Letters of Importance Are Read by Three Ladies in a Farm Orchard; and of What a Fortunate Thing It Is, That Women's Arms Are Kind

The veld round the Worcester country house seemed an Eastern carpet, whereon genii and lavish-handed magicians had scattered all the flowers of the earth. Spring had been late; and now, even in October, orange and gold gleamed over the flat plain, hedged by the perpetually rose-pink Worcester mountains. The town had lately sprung up in whitewashed, thatched or flat-roofed houses, round the tall-spired Dutch church standing on the edge of a green, whose four sides were lined by a double row of straight gum trees tapering heavenwards, in competition with the spire. There was a deal of Holland suggested in this Dutch village, and it seemed to contain the peculiar policy of the Cape in its English name of Worcester: it started with a Dutch Farm, a Dutch Church; then came Lord Charles, saw the land, found it good, shot good game, came again, bought a house and called the village in embryo, after one of his brother's titles, Worcester. Two days' journey from Cape Town,

it meant a certain amount of respite from the upheavals taking place in the capital.

Lady Charles and her house party had been in this rural isolation for two weeks when a courier brought the news. Letters from Lord Charles, letters for Georgiana from Aletta and John Bigge, letters for Mrs. Crawford from her husband, who, taking up almost a permanent position on the long green benches of the Society House, saw and heard a great deal of the game.

" The unpleasant affair goes on, Belinda my love; the Free Press have been over free and we have had a scene on the Parade Ground, as Greig got stuff published dealing with the case and distributed it, though the Governor had got Truter to declare all evidence as sub-judice. Bishop Burnett is stuffing the Home Government like prize Michaelmas geese, and the Governor would do well to go home and give his own evidence to the Lords. There are rumors, that to be better supported, Bigge is to be for ever placed in the Somerset fold as son-in-law. I doubt whether his feet will carry him to a church or his liver allow of further proceedings.

" If Somerset goes, sport goes with him, and with that high art, my love, goes our bread and butter. This brings me to a domestic detail, namely that Jane — being now near fifteen it appears — has been asked in marriage by a Van der Bijl: I cannot for

the life of me remember which one, they are all alike as two peas. He tells me he has two thousand vine sticks; which it seems I should be satisfied is a goodly inheritance. I fancy you will be pleased that I have consented. For the life of me, I cannot think which of Jane's angles has raised this passion. . . ."

Mrs. Crawford's relief that any man should think Jane comely was slightly overshadowed by the fact that her daughter was to be the second Englishwoman on record to marry a Cape Dutchman. But maternal pride forced some sort of desire to impart the news. She found Georgiana in the orchard, which, standing on the edge of the grounds, looked straight out from plum and pear trees still in blossom, on to the golden veld and the big blue vleis wherein the rose mountains were mirrored. Georgiana had collected three black babies, hatted them in minute red fezes, and left the rest to nature: these babies sat on the orchard earth, and Georgiana was feeding them with enormous white sweets, the shape and color and design of poached eggs.

"My dear, you only lack an Italian organ," remarked Mrs. Crawford, disturbing the ambrosial feast.

"Belinda, do not interrupt; I am acclimatizing myself; I suppose one must have at least three children if one marries, and I have just received a let-

ter which seems to mean that I have engaged myself. Belinda, what a pity one cannot accomplish little black creatures like these — look at their plump shiny bodies and their beady shining eyes and their hair! Oh, my love, observe the hair! Five little knobbles of tight crispness to each head; like the veld bushes on the tiniest kopjes —" she snatched off a fez as she spoke. " And I am making them chains of blue beads, and dear odd little sporrans of red beads; oh! the darlings! oh la! it's going to be ill! Oh, look after it Belinda, love. See to it — oh, how monstrous! "

She fled from the sight to the other end of the orchard, calling out questions and instructions, while the mother of the recalcitrant nuns supplied the required aid. Presently, a grinning Hottentot slave woman appeared, and claimed the three black babies as her own, so that Mrs. Crawford joined Georgiana whom she found studying the small neat handwriting of Mr. Commissioner John Thomas Bigge.

" And everything seems to go in threes," she groaned, as she laid out on the grass beside her, three locks of fair hair, each tied with blue ribbons. " Look, Belinda," touching each as she spoke, " Cloete, Penderby, and Whitefoote! Papa must have announced the engagement — horrid Papa! I begged him to wait! Ah! I see . . . a rumor! "

" Aletta tells me Mijnfrau exclaimed ' Alle-

macht! Fooi toch!' I am so relieved she kept to vague expressions, I was very nervous about Tante Petronelle's verdict; but, my love, you appear too radiantly joyful for me to believe any catastrophe is the cause."

"Jane has a lover," gasped Belinda.

Georgiana shrieked and jumped to her feet: "Jane — a lover?"

"I am sure I cannot see why you should betray such astonishment, my love;" Mrs. Crawford had nearly fainted with surprised emotion.

"But I am so pleased, and so (oh, so very much so) surprised. Why, Jane is so young! Who is the suitor?"

"A Van der Bijl;" Mrs. Crawford put all the aplomb and bravery she could into the reply.

"Oh, how interesting! How nice!" She meant to say "Goody! A Cape Dutchman! how astonishing!" and thought better of it.

"Georgie, try as I may, I cannot see Jane in a white veil and orange-blossoms"; and this original mother, whose maternal affection was forever at war with her sense of humor, sat down beside Miss Somerset and had a "conniption" according to Miss Somerset — giggle, in plain English.

(Can't you see why she couldn't have married Penderby, the editor?)

Lady Charles, in a trailing cotton riding habit,

carrying sheaves of letters came to share the news.

"Most delighted," she smiled as Mrs. Belinda told her of Jane. "My poor Excellency writes a letter, full of consternation; he and Mr. Bigge and Dr. James are riding out to-morrow or the next day. Listen to what he has to say on the situation:

". . . to have been accused of *Bribery* and *corruption* and to have suffered the indignity of a Commission to inquire into the state of one's policy, are things, my dear child, that have been *monstrous* and sufficient cause for resignation, had not the madness of construction seized me in such toils, that I feel we shall see this thing through or *die with the doing.* Edwards has been convicted of libel, and sentenced to *seven* years, and I have it in private information that he has had practice in this *métier* before. In his cell were found draughts of letters in the handwriting of that damn inquisitor and blackmailer, B.B., who, after receiving Colebrooke at Uitenhague, took up his quarters here — no doubt to watch proceedings. This scandal will be a *turning point* in any doubts the Commissioners may have entertained as to the Establishment at Grahamstown. (That may be the reason I am accused of writing the thing myself!) Bathurst tells me B. B. reported his entire complaints *re* Hart's management of the Government farm at Grahamstown, accusing Hart — which means accusing me — of running the Somerset farm as a *Private Monopoly!* and *fleecing* the poor settler. I saw Walter Bentinck yesterday. Of course the real blame lies with the Home Government, and the non-success of the settlers to supply *themselves, let alone the Cavalry stationed there;* this fact tempered with others, I have dispatched to Bathurst, and as no doubt B. B. has also forwarded some

further accounts of my scandalous transactions and *horse dealing,* England may begin to realize that Philanthropic colonizing is no fool game.

" Inform Georgie that Bigge's proposals are kept as a *secret* in the immediate circle.

" We have offered between us, Government, Barry and I, 20,000 rix dollars, as reward for the *further* knowledge of the perpetrator of the placards — but as I have no doubt in my mind, that one has got a light sentence for another offence — sedition — and the other instigator has got *bigger fish to fry,* and a spite which he would not sell for much gold, I am in no doubt but that no one will claim the reward. The trouble lies with the evidence given by a farmer and a friend, who I do not question was B. B., that Barry was seen hanging round the Kiosque on the night before Findley read it, and that others swear he was seen tearing off the damn filth soon after Findley rode off. Various public bodies have sent addresses of *respect* and *loyalty* which have touched me — not more deeply than they should, for I am damn sick, my dear, of this business, and that you should be subjected to such bad taste. Still, if *all* the public men, who have had lampoons made in their honor — had died with shame, there would be sad to do get together any kind of Government in England. . . . We come for some rest and clean veld air tomorrow, and your kind arms, my lady, I pray.

" C. S."

" The beasts," said Mrs. Crawford, wiping her eyes.

" Dr. James sends six words." Lady Charles read them aloud: " God save us all, my lady." " Then I have a report printed by the Free Press."

She passed the slip to Georgiana, who remarked:

"How odd a thing that so many people, and organizations, seeking freedom, should grasp at Scandal as their chief stepping stone. I have a sincere admiration for Mr. Greig and Mr. Fairbairn, though I own Mr. Pringle has the affliction of only finding freedom in excess of liberty"; she threw herself on her back, arms entwined under her head, which was covered with a little bright blue sun-bonnet or cap, such as the Dutchwomen wore on the farms:

"Oh, thank Heaven, we have kind arms! Poor things — poor dear worried things!"

"Listen to the sentimental Madame Commissionere," laughed Lady Charles. "Being more practical myself, I shall recommend an immediate excursion to the warm springs of Caledon, to help rid my poor Governor of his bile. So bad for his gout, all this commotion! I wish he would resign, and then I should get another look at a decent fence." She stretched out her arms as she spoke and, with her head back and her nostrils quivering, looked like some young hunter eager under restraint. "*Je m'ennuie* — I suppose. Not having Georgie's imagination; neither do I fancy have I the consolation of her sentimental raptures."

Georgiana smoothed the crumpled lavender of her muslin gown; a little ironical smile hovered

elusively about her mouth; then she murmured, quite softly, as though to herself:

> " Have I a friend? (look round and spy)
> So fond, so prepossessed as I."

Both women heard her. Mrs. Crawford glanced up at Lady Charles. This lady, not lacking in wit, caught the words and something of their meaning.

" Georgiana has now a habit of rhyming on every occasion, but I consider her latest ——"

" Not mine,— please, not mine. One of Mr. Gay's fables. Shall I continue? " broke in Georgiana slyly, " as it appears to interest you. The fable is entitled:

" ' The Countryman and Jupiter,'

and has a dedication —' To Myself.' "

" It is full of wit, and not ——"

" Mrs. Crawford may care to listen. For myself, I find the weather too warm and shall go back to the cool hall," interrupted Lady Charles; and collecting her letters and riding whip, she gathered up her habit and turned towards the house, whose green rounded shutters could be seen from the orchard.

" Georgiana, you naughty girl," said Mrs. Crawford.

" I allow myself these harmless little pleasures sometimes;" Georgiana's eyes twinkled. " Her ladyship is prepossessed, there's no denying it.

Poor dear Mamma would never have really approved of my seeing too much of her — but she is pretty; and His Excellency deserved prettiness. One would not object to marrying anyone vastly older than one's self, not if he looked like Charles Henry; but then unfortunately all vastly older persons do not resemble him! That perhaps sets me a little out of humor with m'lady." She reached up and pulled a long spray of bright pink peach-blossom and used its daintiness to keep away the buzzing veld flies, that, settling on the neck and arms, can make conversation in a South African orchard an uncomfortable proceeding. "Dear Mrs. Crawford, tell me why nobody is ever quite happy. There's her ladyship, not quite happy, is she?"

"There is Crawford — not quite happy about Jane!"

"There is poor darling Excellency."

"There are Josias, Whitefoote, and Company, Dirk and Aletta, and everyone we know well — and I?"

"Georgie, love, do you not love Mr. Bigge? Is that why we are becoming so pessimistic? Do you love somebody else, Georgie? Is that the trouble, dear?"

"Dear Mrs. Crawford, believe me when I say I *do* not know. Believe me when I say I understand myself, my motives, and my doings, so little, that I

seem now, like — there — like these peach-blossoms blown about in a breeze which springs from other people's blustering. Love appears to me as the most useful excuse for this state of affairs; but whether it is the Commissioner or big Josias, or — er — other people — or just myself — indeed I cannot say. Circumstances, appear to me to account for much, and more especially for my preposterous conversation!"

She took Mrs. Crawford by the arm and walked her slowly through the orchard, chattering away about the arrivals of the next day: "and in which of my gowns shall I receive the Commissioner? — organdie — the white? or the deep blue tarlatan — and shall I tie up my curls with blue ribbons? I must look my best, certainly I must, for to-morrow evening. Think of it! to-morrow evening my hands will be kissed — and even — perhaps my right eyebrow! Perhaps!"

At the high curved steps of the green-shuttered bow-windowed shooting lodge, she and Mrs. Crawford parted. Georgiana turned at the big oak door leading to her suite of rooms.

"But I said *perhaps,* did I not? I cannot be certain of that kiss on the eyebrows!"

She laughed and waved to her friend, then opened the door and closed it behind her.

CHAPTER XV

A Journey and a Soliloquy on an Ancient Game

Five riders passed up the steep pathway of the Bain's Kloof Gorge two days later. The party, which was composed of the Governor, Dr. Barry, Mr. Bigge, Mr. Whitefoote and an orderly, had slept the night at Wellington, leaving Cape Town in the afternoon of the preceding day. A fierce south-east wind blew across the Isthmus from one Ocean to another, and clouds of fine white sand veiled the curve of False Bay, as if the wind had dashed the surf with tremendous force against the land. They had reached the little village of a single street one mile in length, called the Paarl, because of the granite that capped the mountains behind the village — great shining gray pearl coronets — breathless, with blind eyes, thankful for a "soopje" of Pontac, at the homestead of Japie de Villiers, and thankful for the screen the mountains afforded them from the tearing wind. The peace and brooding atmosphere of the long white-washed, thatched village, almost enticed a longer lingering, had not the Landdhost of the District, from Wellington, ridden over to meet them, and to welcome them

to the next village. The calm, blue, Berg river stretched its placid shallow waters between the Paarl and Wellington; the vineyards, hedged with white wild roses bordered its banks, and beyond was their road, through acres and acres of purple and terra-cotta field flowers.

Wellington village received them in a nightcap of purple evening mists; the noise of cattle coming home from the veld; the crack of the long thonged whips of the herds; vague shadowy humanity that "Daaged" a late day greeting to them from out of the shadow; the high shrill notes of the big frogs from the mud of the river beds; scattered homestead lights; the scent of newly-baked bread and freshly ground coffee; and the distant notes of the deep voice of a native singing to a banjo accompaniment; all the sounds that mean a little rest . . ., a little rest, and then,—the next day; that is the suggestion of an African night! not the dead noiseless darkness of other nights of other lands, but just a lessening of light, a lessening of commotion and sound and energy for a short time; and almost, as the noises have ceased, faint suggestions of the coming of day are heralded by the fowl yards, the lowing of kine, the stirring of sheep, and the twittering of the songless birds; the short interval of life of the day is bridged and linked by the ceaseless Sicada, whose untiring wings fan the air all night.

By five o'clock next morning the party was on its way to Worcester, to reach it that evening in the glow of the sunset. Along the narrow gorge, that afternoon, a troop of baboons, like sentinels on outpost duty guarding the Pass, had rolled heavy rocks from the heights onto the pathway, and over the steep short precipices into the river bed, to crush in their career the sweet smelling herbs, crimson and green ixias, red and yellow proteas; terrifying the horses, more by their shrill chattering and screams than by the rapid descent of the rocks. For refreshment, the party had unsaddled in the shade of some willows, growing near the water's edge, hundreds of feet above the plains of the world around, above the surrounding Wellington peaks that rose from the green valley in soft undulating slopes, as though millions of yards of gentle-toned velvet had been flung over their rock foundations to fall in graceful clinging folds around their base: the Breede-river splashed over the boulders with electric force, sparkling where the sunlight caught its waters, darkling in somber pools. Before the travelers lay the huge plains of Worcester, faced by the Hex river mountains, the great barriers that guarded the interior, one day to be broken and bridged with pickax and tunnel and dynamite into the highway of development that was to reach like a great Octopus to the four corners of the Continent; years were still to

elapse, years full of Wars and Treaties, of Adventure and Concessions, and Discoveries, wherein the country was to retain its rôle of Shuttlecock in the game of Battledore, bandied across the dividing net of nationality; one minute English ground; with the next twist of the Battledore, back it flew into Dutch keeping; backwards and forwards, from 1553 to 1919, and who can predict who will tire of this old-fashioned game first! Battledore and Shuttlecock! And in spite of this perpetual game, the high mountains have bowed themselves, and stooped like tall camels, to take on themselves the burden of iron for man's advancement.

. . . . . .

"Thank God!" ejaculated Somerset, as, in a cloud of red dust, they turned from the high road into the Somerset gardens. "It has the Peace of Eden, Bigge; what think you? and apples ad finitum — not forbidden either!"

. . . . . .

How much his influence had wrought the miracle of the Bigge engagement and how far he felt his daughter's feelings had been sacrificed to the family honor, can only be judged when the reader has read to the end of the story. It was not only the Somerset family honor. In fact, it was a great deal the question of how Georgie was to be saved from herself, for he had never been deceived by her familiar

railleries against Barry. Apart from anything else it was such a ridiculous attachment; he grew uncomfortable at further thought. Barry's removal was a way out, but this other alternative suited all best; her public betrothal to the Commissioner. These were days, too, when young women married often to please papas . . . or made that the excuse. Georgie was so mighty pleasing, and Bigge would never see forty-five again — perhaps even fifty! But if he could do it, why should not Bigge; and run for a prize, too — why not?

That evening Georgiana on the high stoep, under the stars heard John Bigge on his love and his suit.

"I think we will keep this engagement as a secret, only to be shared by our best friends, until after the report of the Commission has reached England, or we will be having your reputation joining the already numerous collection that lie buried under the shadow of Table Mountain," she had said as he kissed her hand. She thought of Josias at that moment: that he had not kissed her hand in the narrow old cabriolet.

" Why, my pet, my pretty child, lose a reputation? why, I should gain a new one, for which the first would be well lost. Child! for years low spirits were my true and faithful companions; they got up with me, went to bed with me, made journeys and returns with me, we paid visits together, they even

affected to be happy and force a laugh from me, but most commonly we sit together and are the prettiest insipidest company in the world. But when you came — like the fate of any humble company they make place for you, and go — my dear."

A fairly pretty speech, not perfectly correct in every detail, but true to his present mood, poor man.

Then they talked like sensible people, she supposed, on the situation, of the great reward offered for any news of the placard perpetrators, and of how awkward it made the situation that Doctor James had been seen by so many witnesses in connection with the business, giving impetus to the idea that at least Government House knew all about it, and knew that the gigantic reward would not be claimed.

Here was poor little Miss Somerset faced with a predicament which was ultimately to take her, not too reluctantly, out of the arms of the Commissioner of Enquiry, for he sought that his new reputation should be entirely respectable. She faced it alone in her bedroom that night; without complicating Aletta, and in her train, Dirk Zorn; without breaking faith with Aletta, she could never, not even to save Doctor James' reputation, tell her family — the world would not believe it, so it would be useless to include them — that *she* had taken down the placard. Even if she did, it would do very little good: she

was the Governor's daughter, and that implied from the point of view of the slanderers that more than likely she was shielding Barry, and so on through interminable tangles. Another idea that came as balm to her mood, was that, if nothing was forthcoming — no further evidence — if Edwards was transported, the whole thing might quiet down. She had meant to tell Lord Charles, the day after the scandal, but fate had bundled her off to Worcester with communication out of the question for days at a time. And now Mr. Commissioner John Bigge was making things more impossible by desiring a very desirable thing from some points of view — "and Papa desires it!" What if the Commissioner were faced by her share in the episode?

She pulled down her short fair hair and began brushing it before her dressing glass. "I did look my part! I have a monstrous straight body . . ." she patted her slim hips through folds of cambric. "It is really not a hard thing to look extremely like a man;" then she began to giggle, and her humor showed in the merry curl of her upper lip, always for her, the weathercock of her moods. "But a *slim young man,* la! la! if I tried for a year I could never assume the disguise of the Commissioner." She shook her brush at the image in the glass. "Perhaps it would be as well," she said, "if we never let ourselves think of such things again —

odious thoughts — oh, Heaven!" She threw the brush into one corner of the room, kicked her little slipper into another, and cried on her bed until she grew cold.

Mr. Penderby, who was more alive to his nerves than was Mr. Whitefoote, had drunk a last desperate drink before retiring to his rooms in a little Pavilion about two hundred yards from the main building. The drink had been desperate, for he had made up his cautious mind that he would be very generous, wait until his three rivals, Josias and Whitefoote and Barry, arrived, and then would muster sufficient courage to propose for her hand. Judge of his shocked honor at finding an added rival, one whose danger had not struck him before: he had certainly seen Georgiana alone in the garden with Mr. Commissioner. This was in itself an unpleasant surprise. It kept him from his bed, and sent him prowling around her window in the moonlight, and caused him to overhear this goddess weeping herself to sleep: for he did not move or budge or breathe, poor wretch; not even when her shoe clattered over the polished floor.

The days spent at Worcester were crammed with expectations and anticipations. The Governor, moody and gout-ridden, wreaked wordy vengeance on the Free Press, which continued its crusade in spite of opposition and the imprisonment of its au-

thors: "enough of these scandals, . . . governa-orial corruptions . . . feeble flight and exile. . . ." Therefore, no one labored under the delusion that things were blowing over in the capital. "God knows," groaned the Governor to Barry, "one cannot live the life of a gentleman in this glass house."

Barry sniggered. "It's the beginning of what histories will call the Freedom of the Press, and the Purification of the Pavilion. We've grown too accustomed to ourselves, these years of war; we have all been too interested and too busy to worry about this 'Corruption' as it is called: with constant excitement of invasion and victories, who was there to bother about his tailor's prejudices? Personally, I believe it's the tailors and their prejudices that are going to form the next invasion: to escape from them we shall all have to find our own Elba. I found mine, did I not, Sir? some years ago."

His odd face puckered as though he were going to cry.

"Strange!" said Somerset, "it is always one's own people who rend one. The Dutch are behaving well and having little or nothing to do with the agitation; and from what I see of men like Cloete and young Van der Bijl, or girls like Aletta, the next generation may break through the hedges of uncultured Calvinism and make something of a Nation out of the Haggis of Nations."

Barry nodded—"But you must first break before you make. . . . I appear to be rhyming wisdom for Posterity."

The Governor changed the conversation and poured himself some Pontac.

"Mr. Bigge has done me the honor to propose for Georgie's hand."

The heavy, pale lids closed over Barry's eyes. To tide over an uncomfortable silence, Lord Charles clapped his hands for a black servant who passed through the Hall where he and Barry were sitting: "Mumbo, tell Piet to clean my guns; we will shoot wild geese this evening on the Blue Vlei;" then he continued as a reply to Barry's silence, "It seems that Georgie is quite willing to accept him." His tone was questioning. Barry's mood stung him; his racked nerves gave vent to a choleric outbreak.

"By God, don't sit there as if you at least did not realize that the solution is miraculous. Have you not helped and encouraged it yourself? . . . Your eyelids themselves are almost an accusation. Damn your impudence! Damn it!" His voice stormed and resounded down the long corridors, and Mr. Penderby and Josias came hurrying along to find the Governor shaking, apoplectic and speechless, and Barry quietly picking up bits of broken glass.

"Barry is as smug as he's demmed," the Governor

grumbled. And no more was said of the affair or of the engagement, though the Staff discussed it among themselves.

Penderby, with the greater knowledge of having seen Bigge and Georgiana in the garden and heard his lady weeping half the night, allowed his own expectations unbounded freedom. But again later in the day it was Penderby, his pale ears turned into crimson at some overheard conversation, who was to intrigue them further. Ears burnt and his slow subnormality rose to untouched heights. Unframed thoughts and hopes swam round his near-sighted, kind, stupid eyes. There might be some chances for him then, if His Excellency squashed the Surgeon's to such degrees of finality. There was no doubt of the conversation drifting from the open window on to the long verandah where Penderby was laboriously tracing on a map three good routes for the next Drag Hunt across the Veld, destined to be censored by Georgiana and passed on to the Master of the Cape Hounds.

As he was a very slow, methodical, young man, the very second the conversation became definite to his intelligence, he began folding up the map in all its complicated creases and collected his papers with Georgiana's written instructions. This took a few minutes. Meanwhile Lord Charles ranted and

fumed out of all proportion or consideration of open windows or casual passers by.

"I'll not have it, confound you! Your pardon! It can't go on, me dear. Not for all the friends in the world — not even for your child." (Penderby turned very white again.) . . . You leave Georgie alone now, and all your play-acting? Where shall it land us, you and me, and all these foolish young women. You overdo it, my dear, and God knows I've encouraged you. But no tricks where the girl is concerned."

Then Barry's high voice:

"I vow you'll make me weep, Sir, and falter, and then all will be over and the years will count for nothing. Georgiana's a darling, but ridiculous and romantic. I ask you, Charles — am I a captivating figure? No, my attitude towards her is the same as my attitude towards all young women. Gallantry! It is the rôle Sir, the rôle the fates have bidden me play: and by God, I'll play it till the boy die, or you give me away — as a bone to the dogs, Sir; the rôle, Sir, that so intrigued Miss Georgie. Stop being the friend and confidant of the sweet thing? No, no, the sweet creature! Daughter, sister, all this, and much more. Tell me not to touch her dear hand, ride with her, advise, cajole, lecture or applaud. . . . Yes, all this will I endeavor to do: Damn you,

Charles, you make me weak and sentimental. I'll have none of these concessions, I'll . . ."

Here Mr. Penderby's conscience, marking time to his sense of order, won by a few seconds, and led him to the farther end of the verandah.

Later, he heard odd sounds like suppressed sobs, though the voices were too far off for further eavesdropping. Still, sobs! tears! and weakness! from Barry! It was monstrous. A mad proceeding! It made Mr. Penderby extremely uncomfortable and miserable. The elated feelings of having a clear field for himself, or at least a field shared only by such undangerous rivals as Whitefoote and Cloete, faded before this genuine distress going on so near him.

Suddenly the long glass doors of the Governor's rooms opened, a furious Barry stumbled down the steps leading to the garden, and the Governor's voice called after him, "I'll put Cloete and Penderby on to smooth over the ruffled waters." Barry turned, saw Penderby's horrified face, and waved "Good luck to you, young Fish Blood!"

"Insulting little viper!" sniffed Penderby. "Fish Blood! I'll seize the first opportunity of running him through his effeminate little body, or slitting his impertinent tongue."

Mr. Penderby became suddenly a normal insulted young man.

And the game of Battledore and Shuttlecock continued, with a little pretty lady making herself useful to the Fates.

CHAPTER XVI

Miss Somerset Loses a Lover, and the First Part of This Story Ends

Later, when things were quieter in the Capital, the Governor and his family returned to Newlands House — the long, low, white house buried in blue hydrangeas on the banks of the Liesbeeck River, about eight miles from Cape Town. The rumored engagement of the Governor's daughter to Mr. Bigge was announced; the first of the Commission's reports had gone to Lord Bathurst and the Colony awaited results.

Things had improved in the Eastern Provinces: better seasons had enabled the farmers and colonists to recover after the losses of the preceding years. Lord Charles has applied for leave of absence, with an idea of giving his own evidence, if it became necessary and if the Report was not found satisfactory —" though I do not doubt that I shall leave my bones and reputation in South Africa . . ." he said, from the long garden chair where he spent hours a day with Georgiana on the lawn beside him. After the return from Worcester, one night when presiding at a complimentary banquet, and without any warn-

ing, he fainted, and gave Josias a fright as he accompanied him home in the barouche, for he lay panting and fighting for breath, cursing away the little he had left. So they had carried him off for quiet to Newlands. But he insisted upon signing all letters and papers and reading over the reports from his son, Major Somerset, at Grahamstown. Aletta, to be near Georgiana, was close by, at the end of the oak avenue, stopping with the Van Bredas of Boshof; the Crawfords had Anne Barnard's old home across the river — the Vineyard, and the three girls fell into the shallow Liesbeeck River that divided the gardens with the perfect regularity with which their lives were conducted. John Bigge had been away at Craddock in the Midland districts, hearing small grumbles, and carrying investigations into the very heart of the country of the discontented Dutch — " these nomads, who seeking liberty, which to them meant the evasion of the responsibility of citizenship, drive hordes of savages before their brave little bands." The country was still in danger of ravages by the bands of natives who, divided by internal troubles and warfare, swept over the Borders, burning and pillaging and plundering. Every day, tales of burned homesteads and fugitive families were brought into the towns to the land-drosts. Lord Charles saw that his native policy had been more than diverted by the ideas of Sir Rufane Don-

kin and the interference of missioners of many nationalities.

"Would that old Donkin had taken the strong measures with them that he, Somerset, had observed with the Wesleyan gang, then probably, public opinion in England would have been more prejudiced than it was"; for he did not attempt to undervalue the power of the Wesleyans and the slight paid to their creed, when one of their envoys began preaching, not to the heathen as was arranged, but to the soldiers in the towns; in which case Bathurst saw eye to eye with the Governor, and Mackenny, the preacher, was recalled. "Oh, it was such a demmed nuisance! and the sun was warm, thank God, and Georgie a pretty enough filly to canter round at his pleasure. So shuffle it all off for an hour or two; if only so many others were not involved! . . . that was the rub! poor little Barry, with the bravery of noblesse oblige! and Milady! having to hear unpleasant stuff, and refusing to remain away too, plucky girl! . . . and an infant on the way!"

Then returned the dreadful tiredness and lassitude. As John Bigge fought his conscience, so Charles Somerset battled with his thoughts, which take a man strongest when he is most unfit, until that supreme moment comes when intense weakness acts as an anæsthetic; the sun is very warm; the sky very blue; the hydrangeas bluer still; a faint breeze

plays about the oak woods hedging out the world; the wonderful numbness creeps upwards from legs to body! to shoulders! to head and eyes! the gentle flapping of the big flag hanging from the white post, seems the only sound — and soon even that ceases.

. . . . . .

"His Excellency is asleep," whispered Georgiana to Aletta who walked up through the woods like a tall Diana toward the group on the lawn, in front of the white house.

"I have been to the stables to leave my horse; Georgie, come and ride; His Excellency will not require you while he sleeps; do come."

Shortly after, the two girls were racing madly along the river below Boshof, past the old Van Riebeeck homestead up to the Bosheuval Hill, rising at the foot of Table Mountain, crowned with a sparkling forest of silver trees. They raced up and they raced down like mad Amazons, and did not stop until they reached a dark oak wood, where pale pink, sweet-scented acacias lined a narrow pathway. The panting horses dragged their hoofs through the thick soft earth; before them spread the panorama of the Peninsula, and the waters of the Two Oceans that framed the land in blue and silver. They fell to discussing love, as two girls will when the world is beautiful, and life is throbbing fast through their veins.

Georgiana, who wanted so much, was going to be

satisfied by so little (as she thought then), and Aletta was still looking for mysterious perfection; gathering every vestige of honey that came in her path, with the slow lethargy which so characterised her: an unsatisfied being, full of untroubled passion and adventure.

Little was said of the John Thomas Bigge episode, but just sufficient to trouble the waters of Miss Somerset's secret well of thought, "Aletta thought she was a fool —." The prospective marriages that have changed their course by that tiny incubus — the disapproval of a friend! A hint of this and that! just a bramble or two across a narrow stream — and, heigh! presto! the waters go elsewhere.

So it happened that while the two girls were discussing love on the Bosheuvel, two Commissioners, Mr. Bigge and Mr. Colebrooke, tired with the heat of the town, being Englishmen, decided as the sun became less visible to walk some miles across the face of the mountains, past the Block-houses, down into the main road (leading from Cape Town to Simonstown, the naval station), and to finish up through the big iron gates of Newlands House. They talked of the situation; as if they had not had enough of it to last a lifetime!

Commissioner Colebrooke felt that the turn of conversation that happened to include an interview which Bigge had had with the discontented Burnett,

into which Georgiana's name crept, was a heaven-sent opportunity whereby he might be able to save good John Thomas from the unhappy state that is described in the French language with such shortness of perfection: for Mr. Commissioner Mosquito had never ceased to remember the sight he saw on that moonlight night, when he looked down into Stahl Plein — (he had cause to, seeing that every time he performed his toilette, there was the " All that was left of the hair " to remind him) — so " no matter if Bigge was engaged to the minx " he was not the man to shrink from the nasty duty before him. By the time they reached the Blockhouse overlooking the Old Groote Schuur, one of the first homestead settlements of the Dutch East India Company, poor Georgiana was standing, metaphorically, stark naked, stripped, as decently as possible, of every shred of respectability —" creeping in and out of men's rooms at two in the morning " and so and so, and this and that, until Bigge began to tremble as the thought grew, that this twisted-nosed minx was no saint or *ingénue,* and that — oh no, damn it, there are some lengths one does not allow one's most disturbed thoughts to go to. Perhaps he might have caught Mr. Commissioner Mosquito in all his buzz, but one knows how hard these insects are to kill when they have started their dangerous song: they tickle and tease until one resigns one's self a victim.

Bigge swore that he was mistaken, of course: and the other vowed he was showing the greatest proof of his loyalty, etc., etc. But as they turned into the cool gloom of the Newlands gardens, Georgiana and Aletta coming from the stables, met them, and Bigge entreated an interview.

Could the narrow, oak-bordered pathway leading to the river speak, it might tell sad tales and jolly tales, and queer, queer tales, like those uncomfortable bewitched trees and benches and things in legends, that know so much about other people's business. It could tell of how an elderly man and a very young blue-eyed creature walked up and down one summer night, and of snatches of conversation not too low to be overheard.

"But you love him! That seems to be the unrefutable point — my dear, my dear!"

"Sir! you must either believe my strange story or we must part! I understood that when men love they do not doubt."

"Young men, my pet; but Georgie, Georgie, tell me it is all a dream! Let me be able to go to him and say 'This is a lie, thank God.' Let it be this; oh! my little lady, tell me it did not happen. For I want you, Georgie, I want you," and then the poor gentleman forgot all about reputations and the ugly French words that so threatened to distinguish the situation, forgot that he was not a young man, and

forgot he was a Royal Commissioner, forgot what he wished his wife to be, forgot all the ideals that he had set up round Miss Somerset, and for the moment Georgie was sorry she did not return the love of Mr. Commissioner John Thomas Bigge. Still, if he could not believe her explanation of what Mr. Mosquito had seen — well! Just as well then that it should end.

Bigge stuck at the fact that it was Barry's room; the whole point of course, or else how was she to get his clothes? "Cannot you understand, sir, my determination to prevent that scandalous writing ever being seen by any one: I dared not go as myself or trust another."

"But they tell me you love Barry — or loved?"

"Absurd, absurd." "He is that, and this!"— so ran the conversation.

Poor girl! Then she made up her mind that Bigge was going to make life an unpleasant proceeding with jealousy, and ultimately she had him on his knees, kissing her feet, and begging, entreating, swearing to believe anything, if only . . . But "*if only*" was the stumbling block. It could not be kicked out of the way: it could not be obliterated. Bigge, never a suspicious man, slow to everything but a legal or political point, was fussed out of his calm: he felt suddenly he was off his pedestal, and was sharing the dusty ground with the whole family Som-

erset . . . there was something rotten in this abominable affair after all; perhaps this sweet minx had twisted and twiddled his life to suit her own ends. Tears were streaming from her dear blue eyes, and as she bent her head to hide them he saw the round beautiful little breasts held in by the piqué riding habit and the odd little way the hair curled in the nape of her neck — a soft warm spot where his kisses had often fallen: she was breaking him, so he thought, by her surrender and tears. In reality he broke her; for elderly gentlemen must surely at a certain age have learnt the art of taking care of themselves, however romantic they may be; and she, poor girl, grasped at any straw that could help to pull her into any sort of friendly bank. All this the trees might tell from their fund of knowledge; and the sequel the world knows; even history has with it more than bowing acquaintance; also, it ends this part of the book, for the following chapters come as an anti-climax several years later.

That night, Bigge wrote to the Imperial Government his resignation, on the grounds of ill health; and to be honest, he was broken in spirit and hopes.

Georgiana left Newlands a pale little wraith, but thankful that she had confided her secret to one man only, that man her lover; and even he had found it a hard story to believe.

CHAPTER XVII

How Things Change!

Five Years Later in England and Orangezicht, and How Aletta Sings to the Harp

Five years later Lord Charles Somerset died at Brighton.

"It is a damned nuisance," Lord Charles had said when his physician told him his fear. When it was over Her Ladyship went off to France with her two daughters, Mary and Augusta Anne.

It was not surprising, his death. Worn out by the trials of espionage and intrigue during his tenancy of Governor of the Cape Colony, he was granted leave of absence. Possibly, there was a greater trial to be faced; Bishop Burnett had primed the Press and various Members with every detail of his wrongs and of Somerset's supposed corrupt dealings. Bigge, remembering Georgiana, wrote him a letter when the news of his leave was granted. "You had better, my Lord, face your God than your Peers." Somerset laughed when he read it, and called to Georgiana that this Bigge was a wit at last, and was it her fault that he had become a humorist. Then he wrote his resignation to the Government, and

slept for twenty-four hours. He had few illusions. The British Government could not then afford to justify the apparent failure of any of its servants. Having started the Babel of Colonizing, with every tongue clacking its own grievances, it looked for a moment as though the Tower of Empire was a venture doomed to failure; America had gone — grievances over-neglected being given as a cause. It was not likely that England would sacrifice a new Colony to save the Somerset honor. High-souled Justice had driven Maximus to a speedy death, encouraged by his vision of the pillars of the Great Roman Empire falling in North Briton and Gaul: Lord Charles, with all the illiteracy of the aristocratic soldier and servant of the State, drew no deductions, being totally ignorant of comparisons dealing with dead Roman Governors: but he died also, dragging his feeble strength across the seas, but leaving his soul, dead, in the Blue Shadow of Table Mountain, where so many more earnest and less earnest servants of the Empire were to leave their bodies and their souls.

For it was a shaky Government at Rome, Great Rome about to fall, that could not in their hour of need justify the greatest iniquities of her Generals or their abortive enthusiasms. In April 1827 Lord Canning succeeded Lord Liverpool as Prime Minister. Lord Goderich followed Earl Bathurst as

Minister for the Colonies. In May, Wilmot Horton, M. P., moved in the Commons that the reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into charges of tyranny should be laid upon the table: this was agreed to. But when in June the matter was debated, with the feeling of the House strongly in his favor, as the reports *had entirely exculpated Lord Charles from the graver charges,* the Minister for the Colonies announced the resignation, written some two months previous, of Lord Charles Somerset. Impossible for Bigge to have foreseen the tide of events, or to have risked the hearing of the debate on the subject, for Heaven alone knew what documents or matter would have been produced. Mr. Wilmot Horton may have had other information than what lay on the Table of the House signed by John Thomas Bigge and Mr. d'Escarey and Mr. Colebrooke.

Georgiana wept for a week in the cold room overlooking the sea where Lord Charles died; then accompanied by James Barry who had been with them during the last days of her father's illness, she travelled up to London and to her sister, Lady Wyndham's house.

Elizabeth Wyndham dried her eyes, and carried her North, to the big gathering of relations collected in Scotland.

While with the Wyndhams, she received from Aletta a letter, which, as this girl wrote very seldom

and always guardedly, was calculated to set Miss Somerset thinking, though she had long ago given up her once conceived idea of confiding all she had heard of Barry's supposed private life. But there were things in the letter which calmed some fears at least.

Reading it in the cold, big, Castle facing the drizzle-haunted moors, her mind and senses returned to sun-streaked avenues and thatch, and silver-treed mountains.

"The Homestead of Orangezicht,
"January, 1827.

"My most dear Georgie,

"It is a very hot night — evening rather, as I can still see to write. Captain Cadogan's sister, who is on her way home from India, promises to take this, and a pot of watermelon Konfeit that Tante Petronelle sends you. We remember how you love it.

"The days and months were very desperately dull after you all left. I was near driven to despair on having to be kissed by Cadogan, who still pesters me. Dirk Zorn is very fat.

"About a month ago Uncle's old Malay driver fell ill and we were forced to put up a 'Negocie' affiche in the George Tavern for a new one. A most amazing old Malay arrived, and has been here ever since. He invited me (he is a freed slave) to his grand-daughter's wedding. Such an affair! It took three days, and she had a new and more gorgeous costume to wear each day; satin, adorned with wonderful beads and tinsels, and splendid headdresses like the Burmese gods Uncle Tobias had on his ship, when he came from Mandalay

— all spiked and golden and silver with orange flower arranged in between the spikes and halo. You did not see a Malay wedding, did you, my love? They, the man and his bride, do not meet until all the friends take them to a bedroom hung with black velvet: the bed alone is white satin. The carpet, also black velvet, was strewn with gold spangles and red camelias. The bride has spent the three days with her women, weeping, in front of a looking glass, quaint dirges; apparently the bridegroom and his friends have had a very merry time, eating and drinking and singing.

" I think this is an extremely amazing idea — this idea of not really knowing the man, well, until the last moment. Here, as you know, we grow too accustomed to our men to be enraptured over the mere marrying. As usual, Georgie, I am speaking vulgarly, and not at all as befits a young Miss.

" I saw a young Malay slave at the wedding who has not been seen by his family for years, so old Zaccary tells me. He was bought, when very young, by Dr. James — and they don't know where he has been, and he will not enlighten them. Most oddly, I met him the other evening, quite late, running through the little oaks near the haunted homestead of Nooitgedacht, and, what say you, Georgie? he had a long rope that he flung over a big, walnut tree growing in the walled garden and climbed up like a monkey. I wondered why he did not go through the gate, until I tried it and found it locked. But, as I was doing this, a voice at the gate, whispered ' Adonis — Adonis — is that you —? Oh, where are you, Adonis? ' Georgie, it was a wonderful voice; unlike any I have ever heard. I must tell you all this, my love, for my heart and soul are fit to burst with suppressed ' me.' Something made me whisper back; ' No, it is I.' And the voice said, ' Who are you? ' I replied, ' Just a woman.' My dear, the voice *cried* — no other word —' Oh, are your

arms kind? . . . are your arms kind?' I ran away, I was so frightened, and for days and nights the voice haunted me. My arms *felt* kind and my heart seemed to grow larger and larger, and I wanted to take it in both hands to the little garden door, and say 'Here — here, poor voice, is my heart, for I cannot give you my arms.'

"One day, Georgie — it took one day's perseverance for the wall is very high — I managed to sling two ropes over the lowest bough of the walnut tree. I pulled myself up and it broke while I was there, but I had time to see the voice. He is most wonderful — in an orange garden,— this beautiful man. Now I know I have found all that my soul has longed for and feared: I shall perhaps not see him again as he is *never* allowed out. What cruel Fate can so imprison a young man? Can he be a criminal? No! His slave, Adonis, is the only person he has ever spoken to — so he whispered. But the walnut bough is broken, and to-day I see the big tree has been cut down and I dare not be found at the gate, where an old slave, deaf and dumb, constantly goes in and out. Oh, my beloved friend, that such happiness and such misery can walk so silently hand in hand.

"In everlasting friendship,

"Your ALETTA."

Georgiana marvelled: Love, that she, alas, had been on a bowing acquaintance with for so many years, had now come to Aletta! In this mysterious fashion too: what it all meant she was at that moment too engrossed in her own miseries to bother to grasp. But Love! Why should she sorrow alone? Why not turn to the one enigmatic creature whose biting tongue had never disarmed her and who, at

least, knew and could sympathize. All doubts of a seraglio behind the Nooitgedacht walls vanished; she vaguely surmised that Barry might have been medical adviser to Aletta's beautiful young man who was imprisoned there; of course — how silly Aletta was — he was probably a wealthy lunatic, and Aletta had read romance into a dull enough explanation.

Georgiana wrote letters to Barry, who was in London entertaining Cloete, over from the Cape for a visit. Barry never answered. Once Josias wrote, saying that even in Cape Town they had heard some London gossip, and if it were even half true, wished her joy and happiness; and added, "*Other* friends — a special friend — would be glad — delighted I fancy, to hear this news confirmed," which for nice, dull Josias, was a stroke of diplomacy which should be regarded in his favor, and might go to what there was (much amiability and stolid worth), to back up his appointment, years later, as Governor of the West Indian island, Jamaica. But practical Josias saw Barry fret with every new letter from Georgiana, and planned his coup to a nicety; for no woman can write to a silent correspondent unless she be neurotic or one of those professional writers of love letters, whose unanswered yearnings seem to have been reserved for later days.

Georgiana was not neurotic. She was a pretty

woman, whose profile fascinated as many men as fall victims to the profile of most pretty women, so she wrote a short note to an officer named Glover, who replied in person, and raised the hopes of Lady Somerset that Georgiana would behave as a pretty girl should and marry him (which Georgiana took some time to realize).

The same year, Major Josias Cloete — who had returned to a fresh appointment at the Cape — was standing at the end of Adderley Street, watching the landing of some troops from a big John Company Indiaman, when —" God bless my soul! where the devil do you spring from?" and he was gripping the hand of Barry.

" Unpleasant affair, Josias — very; I am here on my way to India. Yes, poor Charles Henry! — yes! yes! this all recalls it badly. Miss Georgie pretty cut up still; and not definitely engaged to Glover: But the present position is, that I'm landing to give myself the pleasure of digging in the ribs with a neat little blade, a bull-necked bounder I have had the misfortune to have made this voyage with — a damned insulting beast. You will see me through this, Josias?"

As they walked up the old familiar street and turned off towards the Castle, the big Cloete drag rattled on to the Parade ground and Josias remarked: " Anyhow, you will come out to Ronde-

bosch for the night; we can ride in early to-morrow morning and . . ."

Barry showed over-much zeal to refuse the invitation: "Sorry, sorry Josias, but must be fixing this business early. Amsterdam battery to-morrow morning at six o'clock, eh Josias? Ah, remember the famous duel when you wounded me? and Charles Henry? ——— Poor old Charles Henry!": his voice tailed off to that state of reminiscence that forbade any demand or hint for continuation. Suddenly he looked up at Cloete and touched his arm: "Josias? what exactly do you think about me?"

From any one other man to another, this question would have seemed grotesque, but Cloete was back in the old Barry atmosphere of the twenties.

He held out his hand; "That's all right, Doctorje, you are a game little chap!"

The searching prominent eyes, that seemed so anxious at his question, softened and moistened. "Growing into a damn maudlin sentimentalist, ain't I, Josias?"

"Where are you sleeping to-night?"

"At Orangezicht," replied Barry. "I think I want to taste Orangezicht coffee again, and I hear Aletta is more beautiful than Venus and as remote as Diana, and that old Michael is doubling the dowry, and that Dirk Zorn being out of it Cadogan leaps into the breach; is this correct gossip? I had

it from Miss Georgiana — poor little Miss Georgie! She was up North with the Wyndhams when I left, with young Glover in tow, trying to remind her that he is considered one of the best-looking men in the Army: never could think, Josias, why you big fellows cannot fill breaches better."

"Hadn't you better report yourself at Government House? We are not too gay a Society there, but — Sir Lowry [1] would be delighted to see you."

Barry, as usual, interrupted him with, "No, no; I must go and hear the gossip, and watch the sunset from the mountain. It is no use letting all Cape Town know I am here for twelve hours, is it? Will you oblige me with a mount, Josias?"

Half an hour later Barry unlocked the little garden gate of the white walled house on the mountain side.

Orange trees again! Oleanders in blossom; the silent slaves; old, very old Majuba, with head bent, sitting browsing in the warmth; all seemed unchanged.

The people of Cape Town would have told you that Major Barry had not been to the Cape since Lord Charles left in 1826; leave of absence had been granted, but Lord Charles had left never to return. Various Members of Parliament were pressing the Government for further explanations of the Somer-

[1] The Governor — Sir Lowry Cole.

set policy, questions stimulated by Bishop Burnett's indefatigable persecution of Lord Charles.

Lord Charles resigned and all questions were withdrawn: so men choose their own graves.

But Majuba, could he have spoken, would have told how one stormy, blustering, winter night, two years ago, a muffled little figure had slipped into the garden, and knocked at the big door. Majuba had started with surprise. By the light of the big brass lantern, Majuba lighted Barry into the great Vorhuis, where he had drunk wine and talked to Majuba by the queer finger language, and Majuba had carried the brass lantern before him down the long panelled corridor to the big room all hung with Indian silks and stuffs, and had held the shaded light above the sleeping body of a young man, who wore a high silk stock round his neck, whose face was more beautiful than were the faces of other men, and whose body seemed thin and emaciated under the light coverings: round one hand, that lay on the quilt, he wore a white linen bandage.

Outside the teak shutters, the north wind shrieked maledictions over the town below. Barry had stood at one side of the bed and old Majuba opposite, looking down at the young man. Then they looked at one another. Presently, Barry had passed in to a little dressing room leading off from the bedroom, had waked a tall young slave called Adonis, had

talked with him long into the night, and had walked out into the darkness with a small lantern, alone, down into the town, and on further to the wharf, and the little waiting boat. So he rowed quietly and silently over the stormy waters to the big English sailing ship, straining and tugging at her anchor as though she longed to show her fettle and ride out to meet the angry seas, in the face of the Northern gale. It was so short and quiet, this episode, that Majuba thought of it almost as of a dream; and though the sailing ship folded her sail wings for two days in the Bay, her captain simply took in fresh water and food, and made off quickly for St. Helena as destination. Majuba and Adonis alone knew the name of the only passenger on board.

Always, to old Majuba, Barry confided his fears and sufferings . . . that nothing should be allowed to spoil the quiet living death of the boy . . . "on pain of death, Majuba!" And Barry had left the old slave with his own pistol as a safeguard.

Now he had come again; just as unexpectedly; he walked into the garden, and had some hours' conversation with the tall young man with the bandaged hand, who seemed pale and fretful. The great peace and contentment of the house and garden had given place to a disturbed atmosphere difficult to analyze. Adonis, the body slave, spoke of the long sleepless nights; of conversations, wherein the tall

young man sighed for a glimpse of life beyond the garden walls; of revilings of his dumb slaves, of fits of despair and madness when the music failed to soothe him; of the disgust he had for books and pictures; of midnight walks alone in the garden while Adonis lay sleeping; and of how once a slave who had been acting watchman in the garden that night, had seen him speaking to some one through the grille in the little gate in the wall.

Thinking over the spoiled peace of the walled garden Barry made a definite resolution to get rid of Adonis. It was not, perhaps, that the dumb slaves were all in a conspiracy against him. This was the reason he had given himself for the oft repeated hints and suggestions of old Majuba that the little talking monkey would bring disaster on the House in the Woods. As far as any one knew, Adonis was practically as ignorant of life beyond the garden as the beautiful creature so ardently guarded. For years Barry had put away the idea that repeated itself day and night, sometimes as a foreboding, sometimes as a picture . . . that one day the boy would realize his imprisonment and would endeavor to escape. According to his medical knowledge the boy had but a few more years to live!

So many discontentments, that Barry left the garden that afternoon and walked through the familiar woods with despair and misery for companions. It

did require, as Lord Charles had said, a damn lot of pluck to see the thing through if these years could be kept peaceful and happy. That would be the end of the task; the great day when he would lay down his desperate burden, all the play acting over, all the strain, scheming, joking, working —— the whole of the life that had been but a great jest! He would some day be able to walk far into some hot warm desert and watch life die out of his tired body, or he would step off the sleek sides of some sea-worn rocks into the cold, watery, silver of the moonway across an ocean, or he could go, still with his secret safe, to sweet Georgiana who wanted nothing of him but companionship and sympathy, and sentiment; she, too, was wearied by much living and much planning — perchance, like few had done before.

If only they could ride out into the veld and wander among the native tribes until both should cease to desire more days. But he could not disguise from himself that Finality was the Lure; all ideas were simply methods very pleasant, towards it.

The pursuit of an ideal, followed for many years, without reckoning, had led to such events that turn some lives into fairy tales full of ogres and impossibility.

. . . . . .

He was received with joy by the Household at Orangezicht. Old Michael dragged him from the

arms of Petronelle and Marie, who was defying prediction, appearing perfectly content with the Fiscal, who for his part was doing his best to keep time with his pretty Marie by warding off gout and baldness with unwearying devotion, though it involved the sacrifice of his greatest pleasures.

"There will be a party to-night," announced Marie, "and Tante and I are superintending the slaves; therefore you will go with Uncle Mike, dear Doctorje, and then you must tell us all about Georgiana and the poor Governor. Is it true, that after all she is to be engaged to Josias?"

Barry, before dressing for the ball, walked down the oak avenue. The atmosphere vibrated with memories, painful and idyllic. At the white-walled little reservoir, under the loquoat trees, he sat down, and watched some slave women carrying the water for the household use, up the hill through the woods surrounding the homestead.

There was so much to remember!

The town, lying below, had grown, and was stretching up the slopes of the mountain, and people were beginning to find it quite convenient to reside on the False Bay side of the mountain, driving in by Cape-cart (a light two-wheeled vehicle, introduced by the Huguenots, and reminiscent of the farm carts of Normandy), or by the more humble omnibus that rattled out to Wynberg twice a day. The farm

lands were now mostly used as gardens or sufficiently cultivated to supply the wants of the household and the cattle and horses.

Steps among the leaves disturbed Barry. Dirk Zorn, fatter and more prosperous than ever, snatched a handful of the yellow loquoat fruits and slapped a great hand none too gently on Barry's shoulder.

"But, man! Doctorje! You here. Now what are you doing?"

Barry wriggled away from the friendly hand; he had never regarded Dirk as anything but something of a bore and a fool.

"Mainly indulging in an inclination to do nothing," he replied.

"So?" Zorn sat down on the stone coping and kicked little pieces out of its whitewashed sides.

"Let me return the question to you, being an inquisitive," continued Barry.

"Nix," said Zorn, relapsing into the Dutch of the slaves, now becoming the usual parlance of the Town.

"And Aletta?" asked Barry, "what of Aletta?"

A tall, beautiful woman sauntered from the shade of some loquoat trees, with all the lazy indolent grace that one associated with Aletta.

"Oh, Doctor James! how lovely to see you.

Come and sit by me, Doctor James, and tell me the English news."

"Nie, nie," said Michael, who followed her, "Afterwards, Aletta. Doctorje now comes with me. You must go and dress for this party: a queer girl, this, Doctorje; will not bodder wid her lovers."

They strolled on to the verandah.

"I vow that there must be some special attraction round Orangezicht for Aletta," said the Fiscal's lady, "I can never get her into the town these days; whenever I send to enquire for her, she is away and walking alone. Mark you! Alone! With Cadogan and Company being entertained in a most half-hearted fashion by Tante and Uncle Mike, until Miss Aletta condescends to re-appear."

"And do you remember the mysterious walled garden and the homestead called Nooitgedacht? How worried every one was to discover who the tenant was? Now, no one gives it a thought. All mysteries seemed cleared up and uninteresting after all that terribly trying time of the Commission, and the Placards, and Edwards, and Burnett. Ah, dear me! there is Tante calling me. Aletta, quick! See, it is getting late, and we shall be having guests here before we are ready."

That night, by nine o'clock, the great house was all laughter and dancing and eating and drinking.

Barry was surrounded by friends, to whose invitations he promised many things he never imagined to perform. No use to tell these people that in a few hours a " bull-necked beast " would be waiting for him with every intention to slay.

" I leave almost immediately for India ": he gave this out as an excuse for unaccepted invitations from Myberghs, Vosses, Cloetes, Van Rheenens and Ebdens. Mrs. Crawford with her three quaintly plain daughters, affected the rôle of a half-persuaded Niobe, wailed over the presentation of each girl to Barry, and glowed with joy when he told her how closely Louisa resembled the young Princess Victoria; it gave her an opening for expressing her maternal opinion which was for ever at war with the Niobe rôle. Indeed, her daughters danced all night and ate as heartily as in the old vineyard days. They had contrived to make excellent matches, Jane and Augusta marrying sons of landowners; Jane some years ago had married the Van der Bijl suitor, and Louisa had carried off a prize in the shape of an Irish peer, who on his way to discover India had gone to the Cathedral to pay his Irish respects at the tomb of Sheridan; poor coughing Tommy Sheridan! Louisa as a child had worshipped Sheridan, and went every week to lay an offering of flowers in the barn-like place of worship. Here she met the Irish peer, some distant relative, on his way home

from India, and Mrs. Crawford said she could never be thankful enough that Sheridan was buried in a dark church and not in the churchyard, as Louisa's features (those resembling the Princess Victoria's) were better in a half light.

All this joy and gladness of re-seeing old faces added more and more to the gloom of Barry. Presently the dancing stopped, and coming through the open windows on to the wide white verandah, Barry found Aletta, in her full dress of crimson Indian silk, with one white camelia in her dark hair, seated at her harp and surrounded by a circle of admirers.

She sang in her low soft voice, a little English song, with a refrain after each verse —

> " Tho' through the wide world we should range
> 'Tis in vain from our fortune to fly."

The Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, at the opposite end of the verandah, whispered to Michael, that fortune, in a red coat, seemed to hover very near; and, indeed, Captain Cadogan kept as near Aletta as he dared.

CHAPTER XVIII

Two People Hear True and Curious Things, Tragedies Happen, also the Mystery of the Motto Is Explained

A great, bright star shot across the heavens from the South, and fell behind the dark rim of the North mountains.

This seemed the only sign of life or energy left on the Peninsula. The vivid moon had rifted through her covering of clouds and put to shame the little artificial lights down below in the town; like trembling slaves to time, they flashed back a bright reply to the moon's challenge, and one by one seemed to sink into a dark sea. A faint gray rim showed the curve of the Bay — like the edge of a huge blot of dark blue ink, curved, then going off into a narrower channel, to swell interminable floods where the Bay ended and the Atlantic began.

The house of Orangezicht lay like a great white dove, brooding in her nest of green, above the darkness below. A pale gray moth, big as a bat, drifted in through the open window, softly passive as a bit of moon cloud, until it neared the madness of the

candle, where, intoxicated with its own desires, it swept through the flame, and lay fluttering on the damask-covered window seat.

Then a faint breeze, hot from the warmth of the mountain, stirred the big magnolia trees that framed the moon, and spread their intense scent over the garden. A freakish moonbeam touched several pale gardenia flowers, till they shone like stars turned into ice. Nature's mood seemed so ominous; still passion, suggesting a climax to come.

Barry stepped through the window. A gray cloud covered the Mountain.

Barry hated the Mountain that night. It seemed a great unconquerable being, wrapped in softness, hard beneath; a Nemesis of Vengeance! A symbol of Fate to those who defy her; crouching high above desire and ambition of man or woman, the Overseer of its slaves.

The electrical heaviness of the atmosphere played havoc with the overstrained nerves of Barry. He flung himself to the warm earth, and looked with terror at the great, watching Mountain. The wind changed, and rustling through the palms, brought cold mists up from the Bay. The dull, desperate sense of impending mystery and emotion, seemed fanned into a small flame of restlessness; every leaf quivered! The dulled clash of palm leaves stirred by the wind, irritated. He got up and walked into

the house; the heavy scent of the magnolias sickened him. Once he thought he saw a bright shadow flit across the grass and disappear behind a myrtle hedge; but he found it was only the moon at her games again; a moonbeam catching a waving palm leaf, which sent its reflection flying like a gray wraith into the shrubs.

He took up a book and tried to read, but the restless feeling remained, and he found he had read pages without remembering one word. Nooitgedacht! Nooitgedacht! Was it his heart beating so loudly that it turned the silence of the room into throbbing sound? Was he saying this word over and over again? There was something tapping, tapping for admittance to his brain, or was it only the hammering of his heart? Nooitgedacht? The magnetic house which kept him in Cape Town, and drew him there from all parts of the world! It was as if his secret craved to be told — this was the tapping, maybe. The secret so long and carefully guarded was bursting his brain — or no! Was there something wrong in the white house with the high wall?

Tortured by premonitions he was aware of no conscious decision.

"There is no pain, passion, or emotion, capable of hurting me; life cannot hold any further obstacle I am not able to conquer. . . ." As a long-learnt

lesson these words were repeated again and again, with no calming effect.

As in a dream Barry reached the little door in the wall, unlocked the gate and passed into the moonlit garden. Low whispering voices from the laurel bushes travelled clearly in the night air! Barry's brain reeled and he fell against the wall. With an effort he forced his mind to grasp the meaning of the whispered words. Silhouetted by the moonlight, was a tall young man, with his body pressed against the wall. In the wall was a gaping irregular hole, where bricks and plaster had been roughly parted.

The voices were low and desperate with passion; one was the heavy, deep voice of a woman. That they had met like this for weeks penetrated into Barry's brain — this hermit boy and the woman who pleaded for admittance.

"Ah yes, you must come — must come," and the boy was tearing with bleeding hands at the jagged hole in the wall.

Something crimson showed — Aletta's crimson silk gown — Aletta's slim body was crushing through.

Old Majuba's unsteady feet could just obey his faithful brain. He heard nothing, but saw the figures in the moonlight. Barry, paralyzed, seeing all the scheme of years pulled to bits, watched, fasci-

nated, the awful pale desire in the boy's face, the radiance of Aletta as she stood before him. . . . The boy stood up like a god, with arms flung to the heavens;

" My woman, my woman —" he shouted.

Majuba's unsteady old hand fired the pistol that was to kill the creature who had done this wrong. From the far terrace he came hurrying towards Tragedy . . . but too far . . . they were almost in each other's arms. The noise of the firing released the horrified Barry; he saw the boy fall: he fell sideways with one hand in the red of Aletta's dress.

All the agony of years escaped in torrents of words.

" Damn you . . . oh! damn you!" Barry cursed the terrified, pale girl.

Then the shrill voice broke: Barry was on the grass beside the long, still body.

" Ah, my darling, my darling! you have killed him, oh God! You've killed my child! "

Barry was pulling away at the soft shirt and stock at the boy's neck. Old Majuba lay at the boy's feet, his face hidden.

Aletta, numbed and horrified, sought vainly for consecutive ideas — some half remembered words chased through her brain, " And the flesh was the flesh of a leper, white as snow ——"

"Stop. Oh stop!" The blood rushed to her face. She pushed aside the little surgeon.

"This is my Love, this is my Love," she cried, kneeling as if she would kiss the boy's lips.

Then Barry: "You fool, you little fool, do not touch him. See! Now, you understand! Look! Yes, look! He is a leper — my son was a leper. Oh! God, oh!" Barry was moaning on the ground beside the body, moaning like a woman.

Then the enormity of it all burst upon Aletta. What had he been saying? He was mad — she was mad! — the whole awful affair — the terrible continuous moaning,— and the white flesh shining like silver in this dreadful scented garden. . . .

. . . . . .

Hours afterwards Barry found her, stiff with cold and unshed tears, lying in some laurel bushes near the little door in the wall.

Barry was panting and deadly white.

"I'm monstrous sorry, m'dear: I wish you would be gentle; don't look scared like that, m'dear; I'm tired, so tired. Try and understand me. If he had kissed you! Aletta, think! Just think! I could not have reached you in time — and afterwards! — What a life for him!

"I hoped to keep him safe behind these walls. The slaves were silent enough, God knows, all of 'em silent — little Adonis though — ah yes, I forgot

— there was little Adonis. No one guessed. (Aletta shivered.) "People wondered, that wa all. I have had this awful sorrow, Aletta, for many years. I had to forget sometimes. I had to work My beautiful child a leper — oh, the horror! Poor old Majuba. He meant to guard him so well."

There was silence for a few moments. Aletta watched the vivid dawn lights flash across the Isthmus on to the Mountain. Then Barry's tired voice continued:

"I have told no other soul of this: I only tell you because you will carry in your heart, as I have carried in mine, a great sorrow that no one shall ever know." His voice hardened, rasped. "You hear, girl — that no one shall ever know. I'm sick of it all; it must go on, that's the pity of it all; it must go on. Here is the key, Aletta, go home; say I had to leave early — anything will do. You've been a fool, Aletta; good-by."

Aletta jumped up.

The sun was in the garden, and the sun made everything possible. As she reached the little gate, Barry called after her.

"Find Adonis! Find the slaves. Tell them to come to me."

But Aletta left the garden. She feared the awful, shining skin of that dead boy, the horror of what she had been saved from seared, white, through her

whole being. Love and Passion and Beauty — and a Leper's Skin all round it! And the garden wall which, between them, they had broken down. Ah! But Love was always horrible: she had known it from the days when Dirk's fat hands had held her captive for his kisses. She looked and saw her own hands red, to match her red dress and her red flowers. Horrible! She had, perhaps, touched his body.

In the cold morning she passed through the Orangezicht woods. Once she stopped. Other sounds were coming from the walled garden: the sounds which dumb men make when they cry. She shut out the noise, and with her hands over her ears ran terrified across the little bridge.

CHAPTER XIX

An Unfortunate "Sottise"

Major Cloete Suffers a Great Shock, after a Duel, Which Is Fought Behind the Amsterdam Battery

At a quarter of an hour before six o'clock, Major Cloete's orderly brought his horse round to the door of his Castle quarters. It had taken the efforts of several subalterns and their orderlies to rouse Cloete. The only occasions on which Josias rose up willingly, were the days when he hunted across the Cape Flats, and the welcomed morning when he shook off the dull earth of the island of Tristan d'Acunah and sailed for the mainland.

The Castle only knew that Major Cloete, for his own good reasons, wished to be up and dressed by five, although he had been dancing as late as midnight or past. Therefore, the efforts in that direction were commenced at four-thirty. By five, two Captains and an orderly had to retire wth disfigurements and one fairly serious wound. By half past five, a subaltern, nursing a bleeding nose, fell very suddenly through the open door, on to a miscellaneous collection of alarm clocks, wet sponges, razor

strops and burnt feathers. The affair was not conducted without many strange noises, interspersed with curses and oaths; but, by a quarter to six, the result, in the shape of Josias, was clattering down the stairs into the courtyard, to his waiting horse, two orderlies fastening up various straps and buttons as he descended. His orderly passed him a letter . . . "Came by yesterday's mail, sir." Hardly glancing at it, he crushed it into his breast pocket and mounted.

He trotted his mare across the "Parade," where the sun's rays were so strong that he crossed the Square and rode along the city side, in the shade of the twisted fir trees, whose heads were perpetually bowed before the violence of the south-east winds that gave the name of the "funnel" to that part of the Town. Arrived at the Waterkant, he rode along the sea front, past Rogge Bay, where the morning had brought in the fishing boats from a wind-swept night off Robben Island.

As he neared "Green Point," the Amsterdam Battery barred his path. He tied his horse to a low mimosa tree and stalked over the Downs, to the spot, sheltered by the South side of the Fort and some protea shrub.

An arm of the Bay, like a narrow backwater, curved into the green Downs. A boat was rowed carefully into its seclusive waters, and two men

jumped ashore. Josias, standing like some martial monumental figure against the sky-line, watched passively the two men.

"The bull-necked bounder," he snorted, "a damn uncomfortable match for Barry."

Minutes passed.

Josias pulled out a flask and put it to his mouth.

Waiting, he remembered his letter. In his haste to keep the duel appointment, he had not even noticed the handwriting and address. Now he saw that it was from Georgiana. Still, he opened it calmly; she had written to him on several occasions. Suddenly, reading, he trembled . . . dear little sweet lady . . . what did she mean? . . . an amazing piece of indiscretion.

"Dec.

"St. James' Square, London.

"Dear Josias, Major Cloete,

"In the days long ago, when we were all rather unhappy, you told me you loved me. In these days when I am *very* unhappy I ask if you *still* do so. Pray, dear Major Cloete, do not say yes, for fear of *hurting* me, for it would only be a bit of my heart that would suffer. I think some of the other pieces are somewhere in your dear land . . . left behind with the sun, among the silver trees. This other piece of heart is very lonely. I could weep.

"Your sincere friend,

"GEORGIANA SOMERSET."

"Pretty darling," he muttered . . . "little bits

of her heart . . . damned if we don't collect them together. No fine St. James' house, milady — no dollars, but there is sun, my sweet,"— he glanced up at the world from this wonderful glorious scrap of paper. "No, by my life, there is no sun and it's damn chillsome, and where the devil is Barry? Get this silly business over, and then to write to my lady; of course there will be sun and — and little bits of heart."

More minutes passed.

The bull-necked one became impatient. Another small boat danced silently into the little Bay. Josias saw Black Jan and the fat spaniel, Psyche, in the bows.

Suddenly the sun was covered by clouds that seemed to burst, in dark gray masses, from the blue heavens; a hot blast of wind blew Josias' sword hard against his leg; the wind seemed to start low, and then to rise to the clouds, collected them with fresh puffs and gusts, herded them together, and chased them, mass after mass, flying helter skelter before his voice across the Bay. The clouds seemed to call up reinforcements. Miraculously they appeared to congregate behind Table Mountain, and then sweep over, to descend like an interminable white cascade of down and softness, they were hurried and driven to join the others, rushing into the horizon. Some, reluctant to start their long journey

across the seas, hung back, making dark patches along the Downs; the little boats fretted among the angry waves that dashed into the narrow opening of the little Bay of the Fort.

Josias pulled his great military coat up to his ears, and buttoned it close, more to keep the sand and dust from his eyes and ears, than for any other reason. He damned Barry loudly and long. He re-read his letter. This only accentuated his impatience.

It was now past half-past six.

The bull-necked one was chuckling over a bloodless victory, when a white-roofed cab appeared, with its Malay driver having a mighty hard time to hold on to his bee-hive straw hat, its ribbons flapping into his eyes.

There was just half an hour before the ship sailed.

Josias saw the emaciated little form of Barry stumbling along the rough ground round the Fort. He seemed thinner, and as Josias saw his face he yelled: "By Jehosophat, you are ill, man! Not fit to fight! What is it? What is it, James?" His voice grew almost tender.

"Do not waste time, Josias."

Cloete followed him in horrified silence, as he groped and stumbled across the Downs to the little Bay.

Barry seemed scarcely able to stand, his breath coming in quick pants. Josias wondered for one second if it might be fright — a reason out of keeping with Barry's nature: but he felt it wanted more than fright to account for this wreck of his little surgeon.

They paced off the distance, while Josias grumbled none too softly of murder, and the bull-necked one's second whispered into the ear of his friend.

Josias placed the pistol in Barry's hand. It was icy cold and trembled.

Another blinding gust of wind veiled the world.

Josias closed his eyes.

The bull-necked murderer raised his arm.

But no shots were fired. Barry lurched forward and fell on his face.

"Fainted," sniffed the other second, and he and the bull-necked one strutted off to the George Inn in the town.

Josias bent over Barry and turned the thin body round; he pulled off the tight high stock and opened the coat and vest. To his amazement, he found a towel of coarse linen wrapped round the body, beneath it another towel — again another — then he sprang to his feet.

"God in Heaven, *it's a woman!*"

The figure at his feet stirred and shivered.

Josias knelt down and replaced the towels with big trembling fingers. Then — the still grumbling familiar voice ——" Damned impertinence, sir! What the devil are you? Ah, Josias, I'm tired, monstrously tired. So you know now, Josias. On your honor, swear, on your honor, no word of it. Get me on board, Josias. I am finished with the Cape now. I have often been astonished that you did not guess this before, Josias, that day of our duel. Poor Charles Henry!"

Barry turned feebly, and Cloete propped the thin little creature against his knee. The tired faint voice went on:

"It is true, that gossip of Lord Kinsey, my father. Oh! yes, Charles Henry knew — only he — he knew the man I loved too. I followed that man, Josias, old dear, all over the world . . . and home; no, not even Black Jan knows. Funny story, is it not, Josias — and the towels? Yes! six of 'em. I'm thinner than you think —— I always wrapped them round me,—— monstrously unpleasant things, Josias. You see, Josias, I wanted to forget some things, and I wanted — had to — work: but I must go on, though I'm damn tired, Josias. . . ." The voice was almost too faint to be heard. "I must trust your silence in this whole affair."

Major Josias Cloete, six feet three and a dragoon, with big tears racing down his florid cheeks, stood

up, squared his shoulders, then stooped, tenderly picked up the thin body of the Inspector General of His Majesty's hospitals, and walked down to the waiting boat.

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